

# Prospect

www.prospectmagazine.co.uk

NOVEMBER 2015 | £4.95

## Could Corbyn ever win?

**PETER KELLNER: NEW POLLS**

**What Labour should now say**

**PHILIP COLLINS**

**Europe's empty promise**

**NIAL FERGUSON**

**The flaws in the case  
for Heathrow**

**JOHN KAY**

**Putin's plan for Syria**

**RACHEL POLONSKY**

**Donald Trump:  
child of narcissism**

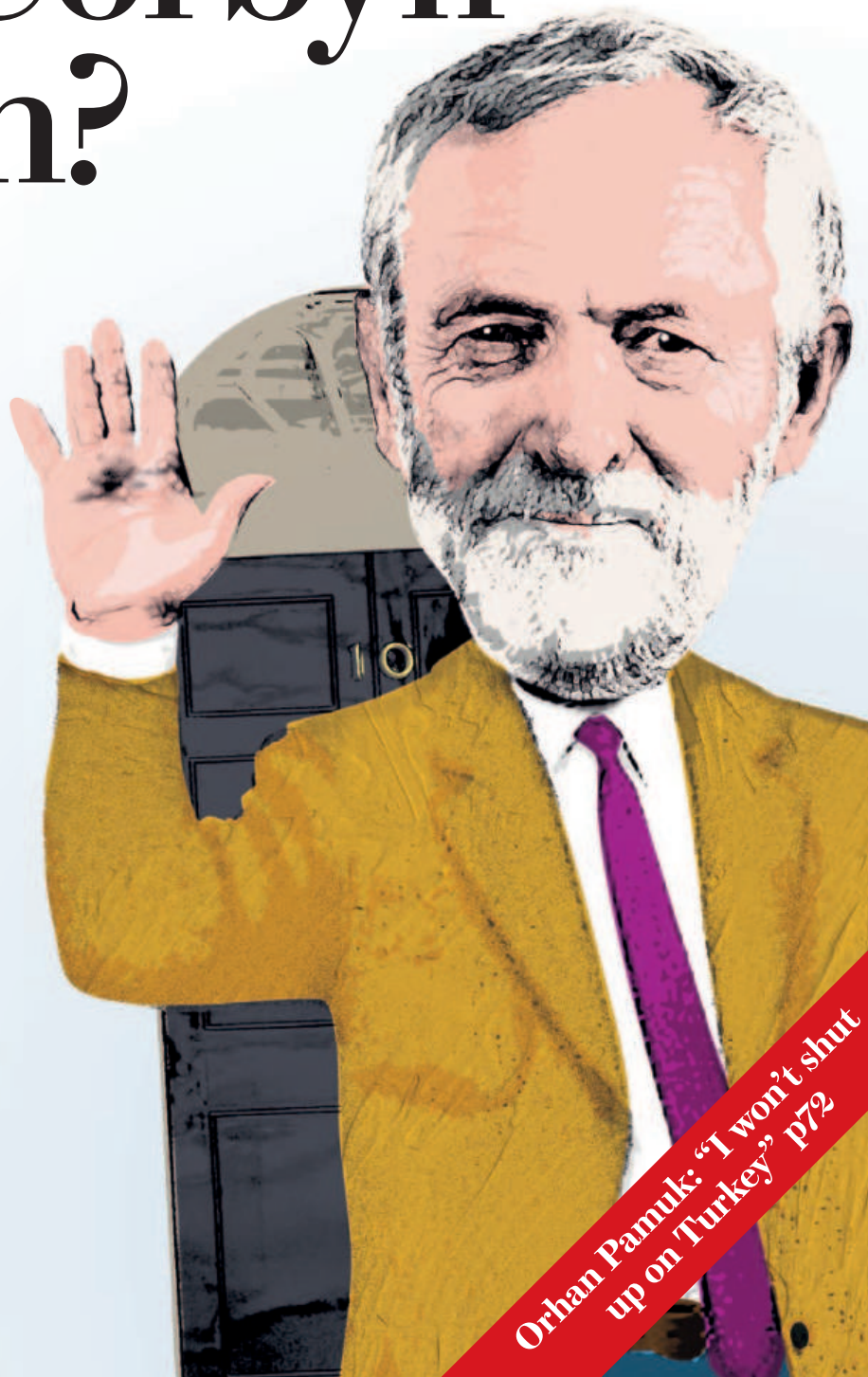
**DIANE ROBERTS**

**How to write a hit single**

**JOHN HARRIS**

*Also*

Ferdinand Mount on Kissinger's  
secret weapon; Sam Tanenhaus on  
Republican trash; Anne Chisholm  
on Iris Murdoch's loves and letters



**Orhan Pamuk: "I won't shut  
up on Turkey" p72**



# Successful investing takes dedication. Dedication takes time.

Looking after your financial future can be time consuming. As your trusted partner, we take the time to get to know you and your personal objectives. Once we have gained a deep understanding of these goals, our dedicated experts construct a portfolio to meet your individual needs.

The value of investments and the income received from them can fall as well as rise. You may not get back the amount you invested.

Call Mary-Anne Daly on **020 7658 1300**  
or email [mdaly@cazenovecapital.com](mailto:mdaly@cazenovecapital.com)  
[cazenovecapital.com](http://cazenovecapital.com)

**CAZENOVE**  
CAPITAL MANAGEMENT

# Prospect

2 Queen Anne's Gate, London, SW1H 9AA  
 Publishing 020 7255 1281  
 Editorial 020 7255 1344  
 Email [publishing@prospectmagazine.co.uk](mailto:publishing@prospectmagazine.co.uk)  
[editorial@prospectmagazine.co.uk](mailto:editorial@prospectmagazine.co.uk)  
 Website [www.prospectmagazine.co.uk](http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk)  
 Next issue published 15th October

## Editorial

Editor and Chief Executive Bronwen Maddox  
 Editor-at-Large David Goodhart  
 Deputy Editor Jay Elwes  
 Managing Editor Jonathan Derbyshire  
 Arts & Books Editor Sameer Rahim  
 Digital Editor Serena Kutchinsky  
 Assistant Digital Editor Josh Lowe  
 Design Mike Turner, Anne Rowe  
 Production Assistant Chris Tilbury  
 Editorial Assistant Sadie Levy Gale

## Publishing

Commercial Director Alex Stevenson  
 Finance Manager Pauline Joy  
 Head of Marketing Paul Mortimer  
 Marketing & Circulation Executive James Hawkins  
 Head of Engagement David Tripepi-Lewis  
 Head of Events Charlotte Stone  
 Events Assistant Sara Badawi  
 Editorial roundtables Penny Cranford  
 Head of Advertising Sales  
 Adam Kinlan 020 3372 2934  
 Senior Account Manager  
 Johnnie Norton 020 3372 2931  
 Account Manager  
 Paulo Tavares 020 3372 2972

## Editorial advisory board

David Cannadine, Jennifer Coombs, Clive Cowdery, AC Grayling, Peter Hall, John Kay, Peter Kellner, Nader Mousavizadeh, Toby Mundy, Jean Seaton

## Associate Editors

Hephzibah Anderson, Philip Ball, Nick Carn, Philip Collins, Andy Davis, Edward Dox, Ian Irvine, Anatole Kaletsky, Sam Knight, Sam Leith, Emran Mian, Wendell Stevenson, Sam Tanenhaus

## Contributing Editors

Anjana Ahuja, Anna Blundy, Tom Chatfield, James Crabtree, David Edmonds, Josef Joffe, Joy Lo Dico, Elizabeth Pisani, Francine Stock

## Annual subscription rates

UK £30; Europe £47; Rest of the World £50  
 \*Prices are for print-only subscriptions  
 Prospect Subscriptions, 800 Guillat Avenue,  
 Kent Science Park, Sittingbourne, ME9 8GU  
 Tel 0844 249 0486; 44(0)1795 414 957  
 Fax 01795 414 555

Email [prospect@servicehelpline.co.uk](mailto:prospect@servicehelpline.co.uk)  
 Website [www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/subscribe](http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/subscribe)  
 Cheques payable to Prospect Publishing Ltd. If you are not satisfied with your subscription, you can cancel by writing to Prospect. You will receive a refund on any unfulfilled issues.

The views represented in this magazine are not necessarily those of Prospect Publishing Ltd. Best endeavours have been taken in all cases to represent faithfully the views of all contributors and interviewees. The publisher accepts no responsibility for errors, omissions or the consequences thereof.

## Newtrade distribution

Seymour Distribution Ltd  
 2 East Poultry Avenue, London, EC1A 9PT  
 Tel: 020 7429 4000

## Images

Cover: Mike Turner  
 Cartoons by: Susan Camilleri Konar, Bill Proud, Ron McGeary, Geoff Thompson, Paul Wood, Philip Witte, John Caldwell, Kent Taylor, Roy Nixon, Grizelda  
 ISSN: 13595024  
 Additional design by: Jennifer Owens

## Foreword

# The winning formula



Could Jeremy Corbyn ever get to No.10? For all the improbability of that image, as our exclusive polls this month show (see Peter Kellner, p24), voters say they back some policies he embraces far more than they do the government's. He is also clearly "on to something," as Peter puts it, in trying to strike a new tone. But you can't glue together a winning platform from these strands, as he also notes. The prospect of Prime Minister Corbyn remains implausible unless he becomes less like, well, Jeremy Corbyn.

Being Leader of the Opposition has never been a smooth ride (see *The Way We Were*, p88). But Phil Collins, (p27), offers a script for what the Opposition should now say, targetting the government's weak flanks, such as tax credits, Europe, and social mobility. David Cameron used his conference speech to revive the theme with which he opened his premiership, of remaking his party into one of compassionate Conservatism. If he succeeds, that could be a recipe for future victories. But for a leader who once giped at Tony Blair, "You were the future, once," it is striking how much in his speech he resembled Blair.

The government's confidence rests not just on the existence of Corbyn but on the recovery. Yet George Osborne's plans are vulnerable to factors beyond his control as well as to a backlash against cuts. Room to soften the withdrawal of tax credits as Boris Johnson is now urging (p14, Osborne the Nation Builder) would disappear in a slowdown. Building on the scale he plans remains hard; John Kay (p42) demolishes the model the Airports Commission used to recommend expansion at Heathrow. Anatole Kaletsky argues (p18), too, that the next crisis could well be labelled Made in China. And Europe was the huge omission in Cameron's and Osborne's speeches. The "in" case is slipping away from Cameron's grasp in rows about migration (see David Goodhart and Cathryn Costello, p22). Migration, plus the Eurozone's contradictions, could even break the union, as Niall Ferguson argues (p32), and before that point, confound its aspirations.

Those aspirations barely extend at the moment to a coherent foreign policy—certainly towards Syria. Rachel Polonsky, p50, sets out a controversial case for seeing the conflict more through Russia's eyes, and joining Moscow in backing the Assad regime—or staying out. That's not a view I share; the risk of civil war seems great. But she is right that the west needs to deal with Russia in this. And with Turkey, where Europe also sends mixed signals in discouraging the Erdoğan government from authoritarianism; Orhan Pamuk (see Sameer Rahim's interview with the great novelist, p72), says he won't stop speaking out against it.

Meanwhile, US politics has rarely seemed more separate. Sam Tanenhaus, former Editor of the *New York Times Book Review*, who joins us to write about the 2016 US election, describes the Republicans trashing each other; Diane Roberts adds that Donald Trump (p16) is a phenomenon beyond parody. As a respite from the tangled calculations of politics, you might turn to John Harris's account of how to make a hit (p64). There is, he says, a formula for a winner in the "modern pop age" and the Swedes—or at least, one of them—have found it.

*Bronwen Maddox*



# We strive to go deeper.

## Murray Income Trust ISA and Share Plan

Investing for income growth is a skill. Sometimes, an investment that seems great on paper may not be so good when you look beneath the surface.

Murray Income Trust searches for high-quality income opportunities by getting to know in depth every company in whose shares we invest. We meet management face-to-face. We ask tough questions – and we only invest when we get to the bottom of how a business works.

So when we include a company in Murray Income Trust, you can be sure we've done the legwork.

Please remember, the value of shares and the income from them can go down as well as up and you may get back less than the amount invested. No recommendation is made, positive or otherwise, regarding the ISA and Share Plan.

The value of tax benefits depends on individual circumstances and the favourable tax treatment for ISAs may not be maintained. We recommend you seek financial advice prior to making an investment decision.

Request a brochure: 0500 00 40 00  
[murray-income.co.uk](http://murray-income.co.uk)

**Aberdeen**  
Simply asset management.





# Contents

## November 2015

### This month

- 04 **If I ruled the world**  
JOHN BROWNE
- 06 **Recommends**
- 10 **Prospect events**  
Join us at our  
talks and debates
- 12 **Letters**



### Opinions

- 14 **Osborne the nation builder**  
BRONWEN MADDOX  
*plus* STEPHEN COLLINS'S cartoon strip.
- 15 **Making houses affordable**  
KATE BARKER
- 16 **Donald Trump can't be parodied**  
DIANE ROBERTS
- 17 **Talking trash with the Republicans**  
SAM TANENHAUS



- 18 **The next crisis—Made in China**  
ANATOLE KALETSKY
- 20 **Is privacy a thing of the past?**  
AC GRAYLING

### The Prospect Duel

- 22 **Is our definition of "refugee" too wide?**  
DAVID GOODHART VS CATHRYN COSTELLO



### Features

- 24 **Could Corbyn ever win?**  
New polls: where he beats Cameron  
PETER KELLNER
- 27 **Here's a script for Labour**  
How to be the Opposition  
PHILIP COLLINS



- 32 **The degeneration of Europe**  
Is it now an empty promise?  
NIALL FERGUSON
- 42 **No way to plan an airport**  
The flaws in the Heathrow model  
JOHN KAY
- 46 **Every President's guru**  
Kissinger—reviled and admired  
FERDINAND MOUNT
- 50 **Putin's real aim in Syria**  
Join him or get out  
RACHEL POLONSKY
- 54 **Myths about Africa**  
More prosperous, more democratic  
ALEX PERRY
- 60 **The value of the natural world**  
How to put a cost on climate change  
FRANCES CAIRNCROSS
- 64 **The hit factory**  
A Swede has created the new pop age  
JOHN HARRIS



### Arts & books

- 70 **Smarter than people**  
Evolution beats design  
JOHN KAY
- 72 **Erdoğan wants to control everything**  
"I won't stay silent on Turkey." Orhan Pamuk on protest and writing  
SAMEER RAHIM
- 74 **Laughter in the dark**  
A foul dust floats in Woody Allen's wake  
SAM TANENHAUS
- 77 **The sovereignty of love**  
Iris Murdoch's affairs fuelled her intellectual adventures  
ANNE CHISHOLM



### 80 Books in brief

### Life

- 82 **Leith on life** SAM LEITH
- 82 **Life of the mind** ANNA BLUNDY
- 83 **Matters of taste** WENDELL STEAVENSON
- 84 **Wine** BARRY SMITH
- 84 **DIY investor** ANDY DAVIS

### Endgames

- 87 **The generalist crossword**  
DIDYMUS
- 87 **Engimas & puzzles**  
BARRY R CLARKE
- 88 **The way we were**  
Leaders of the Opposition.  
IAN IRVINE

## Download your free Generalist crossword compilation



To celebrate *Prospect's* 20th anniversary, Tom Johnson (Didymus) has chosen some of his favourite puzzles—one from each year—to include in a unique compilation.

For your free copy visit

[www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/other/free-generalist-crossword](http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/other/free-generalist-crossword)

# If I ruled the world

John Browne

Ditch the quarterly report and get executives to pick up a book instead

**T**he first thing I would do if I ruled the world would be to ban hypothetical questions such as “what would you do if you ruled the world?” Having said that, if I did rule the world, I would ensure that all my subjects rose to the maximum level of their talent. All the social and political barriers to achievement would be broken down—inequality, lack of access to education and healthcare, discrimination and bigotry. When you remove the barriers to opportunity, great things happen.

As part of the campaign against discrimination I would outlaw the outlawing of homosexuality. There are 78 countries in the world where homosexuality is still a crime. If I ruled the world, I would force them all to submit to more liberal attitudes.

Next, I would make sure that people understand that we need energy not just for making things better for rich people, but also for relieving poverty. Without energy we cannot do that. We have to use hydrocarbons, but we should use them wisely. We also need to give up using coal and, until we get something better, increase our use of natural gas.

There needs to be a shift in attitudes to climate change. I would ban people saying that doing something about climate change is about “saving the planet.” It’s actually about saving humanity—the planet will look after itself, whether we’re here or not. I subscribe wholeheartedly to James Lovelock’s “Gaia” theory, which argues that the Earth and all the animals that inhabit it form a self-regulating, complex entity.

Here are some of the things I would do as part of this fight to save humanity. First, I would pour large sums of money into funding for research into renewable energy. Currently, we’re not spending enough. This would have to be a global programme—an Apollo-style programme—to which all nations would subscribe. Second, I would make sure that everyone understood that, if we don’t get this right, people will start migrating all over the world because of changes in land configuration. We might be worried about migration today, but we haven’t seen anything yet. Everyone needs to understand why we are trying to reduce or eliminate the risk of climate change.

If I ruled the world, the distinction between refugees and migrants would

be enshrined in a global constitution. There would be no chance of the two being confused, as the west is currently in danger of doing with the crisis caused by the civil war in Syria. Surely great nations must accept refugees? That’s part of the duty inherent in being a great power. Migration is a different matter, and one that needs to be thought through comprehensively and clearly.

Trust would be an important value if I ruled the world. When BP started doing business in West Papua in Indonesia, I was told that the first thing I needed to do was move a village. At that point I realised something was terribly wrong and went off to find out what was going on. I discovered a population cowed by enormous human rights abuses and villagers at war with each other. There were also environmental issues: people were fishing in the bay with no restriction and forests were being torn up to make way for palm oil trees. We put people on the ground to speak to the locals and set up an independent commission to report on BP’s activity in the region. I insisted that the report had to be totally independent. That didn’t go down well internally, but it was essential if we were going to win the community’s trust and support.

On a less serious note, I would outlaw abuses of the English language that encourage sloppy thinking. I would ban people from starting letters or emails with “Hi” and would encourage them to pay close attention to the rules of punctuation. Everybody would be issued with a copy of the popular guide to punctuation, *Eats, Shoots and Leaves*. They would have no excuse for ever misusing an apostrophe again. I would also outlaw the use of nouns as verbs, a particular plague in the world of business.

I would place a total ban on corporate financial reporting on a quarterly basis, which reduces the attention span of executives and confuses everybody—shareholders as well as managers. Far too often it results in people measuring the noise not the signal.

Finally, I would insist that all businesspeople read at least four books a year. The only business book they would be allowed to read is mine. The other three would have to be drawn from the great resources of world literature. **E**

*Lord Browne of Madingley was CEO of BP from 1995-2007. He is the author, with Robin Nuttall and Tommy Stadlen, of “Connect: How Companies Succeed by Engaging Radically with Society” (WH Allen, £20)*





Sicily has been visited by Phoenicians, Greeks, Romans, Normans, Muslims, the French, Germans and Spanish. Now it's your turn.



*Sicily: Centre of Mediterranean Civilizations* covers the whole island, showcasing the main sights and many lesser-known ones, and each departure is led by a specialist in archaeology, art or architecture.

Image: Selinunte, aquatint c. 1830.

This is one of around 250 cultural tours for small groups in Britain, continental Europe, the Middle East, North Africa, India, China, Japan and the Americas.

Contact us: +44 (0)20 8742 3355

[www.martinrandall.com](http://www.martinrandall.com)



MARTIN  
RANDALL  
TRAVEL



LEADING EXPERTS IN CULTURAL TOURS

NO. 1  
BESTSELLER

# "THE MOST EXPLOSIVE POLITICAL BOOK OF THE DECADE"

DAILY MAIL

MICHAEL ASHCROFT & ISABEL OAKESHOTT

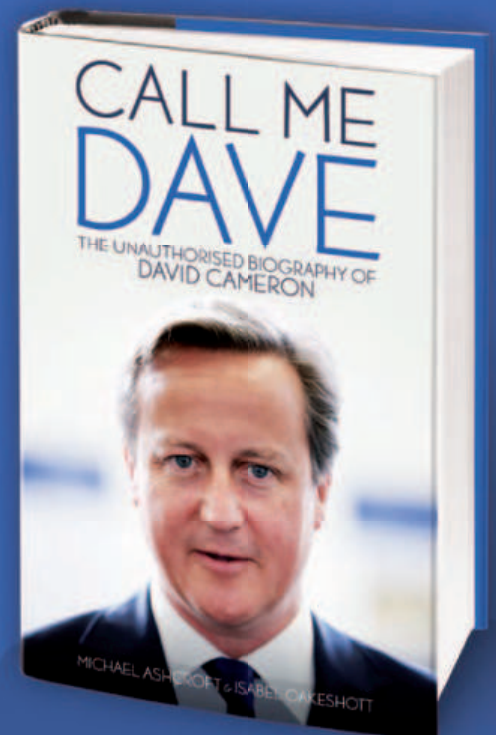
Order your signed copy:

[www.bitebackpublishing.com/callmedave](http://www.bitebackpublishing.com/callmedave)

020 7091 1260



@BitebackPub #CallMeDave



AVAILABLE NOW

# Prospect recommends

## Things to do this month

### Art

#### Alexander Calder: Performing Sculpture

Tate Modern, 11th November to 3rd April 2016

American sculptor Alexander Calder (1898-1976), the son and grandson of famous traditional beaux-arts sculptors, set out to be an engineer. He had a fascination with mathematics, physics, kinetics and the different properties of materials. But drawing claimed him. In his twenties, Calder made airy portraits from wire and then, in Paris, an entire miniature circus from wire and cloth, which is today the pride of the Whitney Museum of American Art in New York. He would make these ingeniously engineered figures perform tricks throughout his life. But it was in 1930 that he grasped that sculpture itself could be the performer, freed from human and even motorised intervention, his eye caught by patches of cardboard stuck on the wall of Piet Mondrian's Paris studio. This exhibition explores how Calder invented the mobile: abstract art that seems forever alive in the present moment. There are loans of critical pieces, some not seen since the 1930s and the magnificent, 3.5m-high *Black Widow* mobile, created in 1948 for the Institute of Architects of Brazil.

#### Juliet Margaret Cameron

Victoria & Albert, 28th November to 21st February

In 1863, when she turned 48, Julia Margaret Cameron was given a camera by her daughter. As a young woman, she had met the British astronomer John Herschel, who introduced her to photography. She began creating haunting, romantic, smudged portraits of family and friends, the children unsmiling, the adults pensive. This exhibition of 100 images marks 200 years since Cameron's birth and 150 since her first exhibition at the V&A.

#### Works to Know by Heart: An Imagined Museum

Tate Liverpool, 20th November to 14th February 2016

This exhibition is something of



*Black Frame* by Alexander Calder, 1934

a thought exercise. Imagine that in the future all the art works on show—gathered here from the Centre Pompidou in Paris, Frankfurt's Museum für Moderne Kunst and Tate's own holdings—suddenly disappeared. Which would you strive to preserve in your visual memory? The three institutions have lent over 60 major works of post-1945 art—both sculpture and painting—by artists as various as Marcel Duchamp, Claes Oldenburg, Bridget Riley, Andy Warhol and Rachel Whiteread.

Emma Crichton-Miller

### Theatre

#### Here We Go

National Theatre, 25th November to 19th December

Like Samuel Beckett and Harold Pinter, Caryl Churchill writes shorter plays as she grows older. But even in her mid-seventies, she remains more formally daring than any other modern playwright. *Here We Go*, billed as a short play about death, is directed by former Royal Court boss Dominic Cooke in the large Lyttelton auditorium and will run for considerably less than an hour and for just 16 performances. Apart

from a two-hour play, *Love and Information*, in 2012, which had 57 scenes and a hundred characters, Churchill's notable recent 50-minute sprints include the brilliant cloning puzzle *A Number* (2002) and a US-UK special relationship piece, *Drunk Enough to Say I Love You* (2006). Rufus Norris's regime as National Theatre artistic director opened with a revival of Churchill's *Light Shining in Buckinghamshire* (1976), a civil war epic. In *Here We Go*, we will be down to the bare bones of mortality at a funeral party for a man with an adventurous past.

#### Funny Girl

Menier Chocolate Factory, London, 20th November to 5th March 2016

The brilliant Sheridan Smith plays Fanny Brice, the legendary comedienne of the Ziegfeld Follies, in the show (and the film) that made Barbra Streisand a star in the mid-1960s. The songs of Jule Styne—who also wrote *Gypsy* and *Bells Are Ringing*—include "People" and "Don't Rain on My Parade," and the whole score, is wonderful old school Broadway. It's not been seen in London since Streisand played here for three months in 1966, and the Menier run is sold out. Hope for returns or

a West End transfer next summer.

#### The Distance

Sheffield Crucible, 29th October to 14th November

One of the sharpest new plays of 2014 has a well-deserved regional premiere. Charlotte Gwinner's production should confirm Deborah Bruce's Sussex night of the soul *The Distance*—in which a middle-aged mother returns from Australia having abandoned her family—as a blistering re-write of Henrik Ibsen's *A Doll's House*. But the sound of this door slamming is tempered with more complicated themes, including the psychology of independence, riots round the corner, some surprise twists and good jokes.

Michael Coveney

### Classical

#### Paavo Järvi & Philharmonia Orchestra play Nielsen

Southbank Centre, 19th November  
Jean Sibelius might have stolen the anniversary limelight for 2015, but this year also marks the 150th birthday of another Nordic classical great: Denmark's national composer Carl Nielsen (1865-1931).

Like his Finnish contemporary, Nielsen lived through a period of sudden and violent change in classical music, reflected in the shift from early folk-lyricism to the knotty provocations of his late works. The always-insightful Estonian conductor Paavo Järvi joins the Philharmonia Orchestra to celebrate Nielsen's broad musical legacy in a concert that pairs the bold, late Flute Concerto (the soloist is Samuel Coles) with the extraordinary Fifth Symphony and its memorable musical battle-of-wills between orchestra and snare-drum soloist. It's a great evening's introduction to Nielsen's colourful, highly textured sound-worlds.

#### Stephen Kovacevich & Martha Argerich

Wigmore Hall, 2nd November

It's one of classical music's first principles: if you have a chance to hear legendary pianist Mar-

Turn over for more Recommends



IT HAS BEEN OVER  
SEVEN DECADES SINCE  
BRITAIN LAST REVIEWED  
ITS WELFARE STATE.  
ISN'T IT TIME WE HAD  
ANOTHER BEVERIDGE-  
STYLE COMMISSION?

*Our first policy paper **Britain in 2030: Building on Beveridge** explores how to banish disease, squalor, want, ignorance and idleness for good.*



PUBLIC POLICY FROM YOUNG PROFESSIONALS

 [WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/THEKENNINGTONGROUP](http://WWW.FACEBOOK.COM/THEKENNINGTONGROUP)

 [WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/COMPANY/THE-KENNINGTON-GROUP](http://WWW.LINKEDIN.COM/COMPANY/THE-KENNINGTON-GROUP)

 @KenningtonUK



© LUNSGATE

### Saoirse Ronan as Eilis Lacey in *Brooklyn*

tha Argerich play, you take it. Here that rule is intensified by the possibility of hearing her in London's most intimate concert venue—the Wigmore Hall. She joins fellow piano great Stephen Kovacevich to celebrate his 75th birthday with piano duos by Debussy and Rachmaninov. In the second-half Kovacevich turns soloist for Schubert's late B-flat major Sonata. Musical birthday parties don't get much starrier.

### Vilde Frang & RSNO

*Usher Hall, Edinburgh, 13th November*

A combination of rough textural immediacy and fine-spun phrasing sets Norwegian violinist Vilde Frang apart from her many virtuoso contemporaries. This young soloist is something special—see for yourself in Edinburgh this month, where she joins the RSNO and conductor Peter Oundjian to traverse the sunny Alpine landscapes of Johannes Brahms's Violin Concerto. Anton Webern's *Langsamer Satz* (also inspired by the mountains) and Mozart's glorious final symphony ("Jupiter") round out the programme.

Alexandra Coghlan

## Film

### Brooklyn

*Released on 6th November*

Nick Hornby has achieved what seemed initially a daunting challenge; he's turned Colm Tóibín's beautiful slow-burn novel into a film that works in cinematic terms. The remarkable Saoirse Ronan plays Eilis, the bright small-town girl from County Wexford who emigrates, finds a good

job and an American suitor, only to find herself drawn back by circumstance to Ireland. The heavy drag of expectation and convention is conveyed in Ronan's reactions rather than exposition and the film does not flaunt the period details or the folklore of the immigrant experience; under John Crowley's direction, it is drenched in the period. The ending leaves you less wrung-out than Tóibín's original but the journey is still highly charged with emotion. At heart, this remains a story of a girl who, despite her resolve, finds herself making choices that are not entirely her own. It's hard to pull off such complexity in film—an art form that likes neat closure—but *Brooklyn* manages to with artful skill.

### Tell Spring Not to Come This Year

*Released on 13th November*

When Nato troops withdrew from Afghanistan in 2013, so did most of the western cameras. Directors Saeed Taji Farouky and Michael J McEvoy, however, accompanied a brigade of the Afghan National Army on a tour of frontline duty in Helmand. Their extraordinary access took them into peril, revealing the vulnerability and concerns of this relatively small band of soldiers who are tasked with a problem that large numbers of international forces could not resolve; it's a compelling and heartrending documentary.

### Gueros

*Released on 20th November*

The word *Gueros* is slang for having blond hair and light skin, hardly characteristic features in Mexico, but then so much about this energetic feature feels new

and arresting. Shot in black and white, it follows troublesome Tomás who goes to live with his slacker brother in Mexico City. Great sound design, immersive camera work and striking shifts of tone make this a strange but involving trip through a time of radical student unrest.

Francine Stock

## Opera

### Morgen und Abend

*Royal Opera House, 13th to 28th November*

A new opera by Austrian composer Georg Friedrich Haas always brings a collective sense of anticipation. Based on a novel by Norwegian writer Jon Fosse, *Morgen und Abend* is the tale of a fisherman from birth to death, conducted through conversations with the ghosts of those whom he loved during his life. Fosse—the most performed living playwright in the world—has written the libretto. The enterprise achieves an additional boost by the casting of Austrian actor Klaus Maria Brandauer as the protagonist.

It has only taken a few years for Haas to establish himself as one of Europe's leading composers and his works sit comfortably on the British stage. A master of mood and sonic atmosphere, Haas has a confident grasp of all aspects of theatre beyond the music and each new work pushes the boundaries of technical endeavour. The inclusion of Brandauer, who can switch with ease between serious drama and glossy romance without losing an ounce of dignity makes this the hottest opera ticket of the year.

### Werther

*English Touring Opera, UK Tour, 2nd October to 18th November*

Widely regarded as the finest of Jules Massenet's operas, *Werther* captures the romantic spirit embodied in Goethe's novel. The combination of Christmas domesticity and the destructive power of love had an impact on the artistic world that reverberates to this day. The opera is dominated by the handsome, over-sensitive artist Werther, played by emerging talent Ed Ballard and sung in the special version for baritone prepared by the composer. In keeping with ETO's fleet-footed productions, conduc-

tor Iain Farrington will place a salon ensemble on stage with the singers to heighten the intimacy.

### Orpheus

*Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, 23rd October to 15th November*

The Royal Opera, in collaboration with the Sam Wanamaker Playhouse, bring Luigi Rossi's baroque opera *Orpheus* to Shakespeare's Globe under the steady directorial hand of Keith Warner. Given the elaborate stage machinery that accompanied the opera when it made its debut in 1647 at the French court, he will have his work cut out. Following their first successful collaboration with Francesco Cavalli's *L'Ormindo* there is every reason to suppose that this will chalk up another hit for the RO, the Globe and the Early Opera Company in this atmospheric, candlelit venue.

Neil Norman

## Science

### What's Your Angle? Getting the Scoop on Maths

*Science Museum, 25th to 29th November*

As *Prospect* has been investigating recently, the nation's interest in maths leaves something to be desired. This maths festival, which marks the 150th anniversary of the London Mathematical Society, hopes to get its audience thinking in numbers. Thanks to input from an interactive theatre company, there is an opportunity to play an undercover detective, marshalling help from professional mathematicians. The festival coincides with the museum's monthly late-night opening with bars—adding wine to the equation should multiply the fun.

### How well prepared are we for emerging diseases?

*University of Liverpool, Science and Society lecture series, 10th November*

Africa is still battling Ebola and the Middle East is currently trying to beat the respiratory syndrome *coronavirus*. This year also saw the first US death from the Bourbon virus, a tick-borne pathogen. New diseases are emerging constantly and this public lecture, by Professor John Collinge, will highlight our preparedness in a rapidly changing, heavily connected world. **12**

Anjana Ahuja

## Our global network is all about you

Our network includes 126 cities in over 45 countries. You'll be connected to more places in the world for all your business needs. Fly anywhere and everywhere with the convenience you deserve.



Reservation : 0800 413 000 (UK)  
00800-0656-2001 (UK & Ireland)  
Ticketing : 020 7495 8641 (UK)

Excellence in Flight

**KOREAN AIR** 





# Prospect events

## Discussions and debates

*Prospect's* first issue was published in October 1995. Our discussions and debates this autumn will examine themes that the magazine has explored consistently over the past 20 years.

### Saturday 17th to Sunday 18th October The Battle of Ideas

Organised by the Institute of Ideas, and supported by *Prospect* and other partners, the Battle of Ideas provides a forum for free thinking, debate and discussion on a wide range of topics. This year, a series of high profile speakers will take part in nearly 100 debates, including "Is technology limiting our humanity?" and "Feminism and its discontents." *Prospect's* Serena Kutchinsky will speak in "The battle over geek culture".

Barbican, Silk Street, London, EC2Y 8DS. Tickets are £100 for the weekend and £55 for the day.

For more information, visit [www.battleofideas.org.uk](http://www.battleofideas.org.uk)

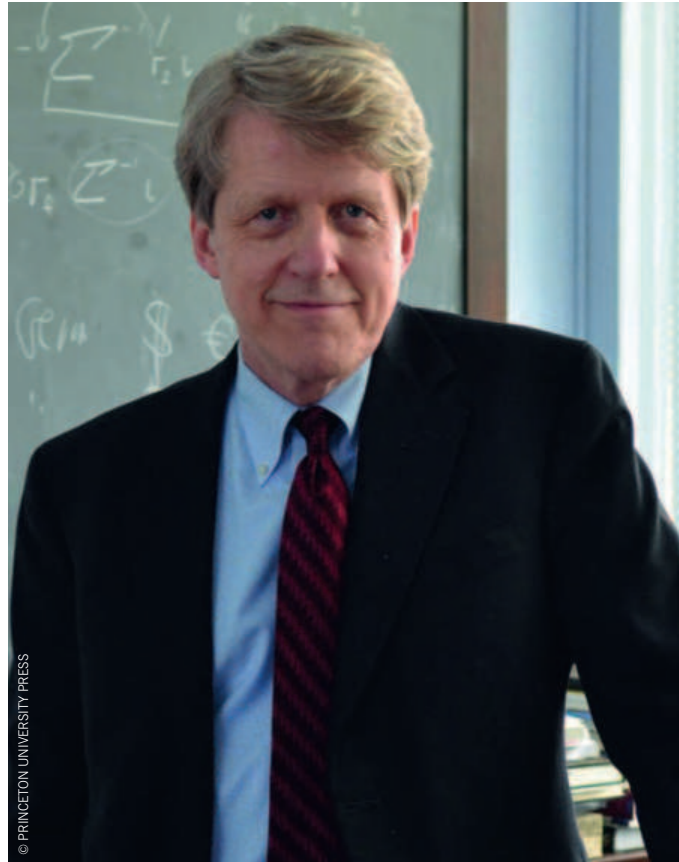
### Wednesday 4th November More liveable, less polluted: How can we change the rapidly growing cities of the world?

Organised by the British Academy, and with *Prospect* as the official media partner, speakers will include Alan Wilson, from the Centre for Advanced Spatial Analysis at UCL, and Peter Madden, CEO of Future Cities. They will ask "How do we design and build energy-efficient, affordable communities that are less congested and less polluted?"

6pm, Surgeons' Hall, Nicolson St, Edinburgh, Midlothian, EH8 9DW. This event is free, but booking is required. To book, visit <http://www.britac.ac.uk/events/2015/more-liveable-less-polluted.cfm>

### Tuesday 10th November Robert Shiller: The economics of deception

Presenting his new book, *Phishing*



Robert Shiller will argue that markets can fool us

for *Phools*, co-written with George A Akerlof, Nobel Prize-winning economist Robert Shiller will explain why markets harm as well as help us. Rather than always working for the greater good, Shiller argues that markets are filled with traps.

6.30pm, *Prospect* offices, 2 Queen Anne's Gate, London. £12/£10 (subscribers).

To buy tickets go to [www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/events](http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/events)

*Prospect* will host an October 22nd debate, backed by Citizens Advice, on affordability of energy with Angus MacNeil MP, Chair of the Select Committee on Energy and Climate Change.

For an account, register at [events@prospect-magazine.co.uk](mailto:events@prospect-magazine.co.uk)

### Wednesday 25th November The language wars: Simon Heffer vs Oliver Kamm

Is there such a thing as correct English? Does it matter if we split infinitives or fuse participles? In a live performance of the *Prospect* "Duel," journalists and authors Simon Heffer and Oliver Kamm argue the pros and cons.

6.30pm, *Prospect* offices, 2 Queen Anne's Gate, London. £12/£10 (subscribers). For tickets: [www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/events](http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/events)

### Saturday 28th November Hay Winter Festival Money grows on trees: Paul Mason talks to Serena Kutchinsky

The Governor of the Bank of England has warned about the financial risks of climate change. Paul Mason, Economics Editor of Channel 4 News, talks to *Prospect's* Serena Kutchinsky and previews the UN Climate Change Summit in Paris.

The Hay Winter Festival will run from the 27th to 29th November. For more information visit [www.hayfestival.com/winterweekend](http://www.hayfestival.com/winterweekend)

### Tuesday 8th December Adair Turner: The dangers of debt

Join *Prospect* for an evening with Adair Turner, former Chairman of the Financial Services Authority, whose new book, *Between Debt and the Devil: Money, Credit, and Fixing Global Finance*, is proving controversial.

Turner says that private debt drives global economic instability, and the idea that credit growth is needed to drive economic progress is a myth.

A limited number of tickets will be available for our subscribers to buy.

To register your interest before they go on sale, please email [events@prospectmagazine.co.uk](mailto:events@prospectmagazine.co.uk)

For more information on all our events, and to book tickets, go to [www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/events](http://www.prospect-magazine.co.uk/events)

## Prospect at the party conferences

This year, *Prospect* hosted discussions supported by Barclays and debates supported by BCS, the Chartered Institute of IT. The Barclays discussions covered banking technology, and the debates with BCS asked how businesses should manage customer data.

Read coverage of these and other *Prospect* events at: [www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/events](http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/events)





# Here's an idea: Give the world leaner, faster, smarter ways to print.

**The new HP LaserJets with JetIntelligence. Now 40% faster.<sup>1</sup>**

The new HP LaserJet 400 series printers deliver the fastest first page out,  
fastest two-sided printing and lowest energy consumption in their class.<sup>2,3</sup>

Go to [hp.com/go/newlaserjets](http://hp.com/go/newlaserjets)



**The world's most preferred printers.**



The world's most preferred printers: Worldwide printer market share, and HP printer brand awareness, consideration, and preference study in 9 markets 2014.

<sup>1</sup> Based on HP internal testing of predecessor devices completed 8/2015. Actual results may vary. Faster refers to First Page Out Time (FPOT) and duplex print speed. For details see [hp.com/go/ljclaims](http://hp.com/go/ljclaims). <sup>2</sup> Based on HP internal testing of top three leading competitors' first page out and duplex print speed completed 8/2015. Subject to device settings. Actual results may vary. For details see [hp.com/go/ljclaims](http://hp.com/go/ljclaims). <sup>3</sup> Based on HP testing using the ENERGY STAR® program's Typical Electricity Consumption (TEC) method or as reported in [energystar.gov](http://energystar.gov) of top three leading competitors as of 8/2015. Actual results may vary. For details see [hp.com/go/ljclaims](http://hp.com/go/ljclaims). © Copyright 2015 HP Development Company, L.P. The information contained herein is subject to change without notice.

# Letters

letters@prospectmagazine.co.uk

## Supply and demand

Although Andrew Adonis acknowledges that the housing crisis in the southeast is “multifaceted” (“How to fix the housing crisis,” October), he says nothing about demand.

In the last 15 years the UK’s population has increased by five million and since 1999, net migration has been the largest contributing factor. Many migrants settle in the southeast, and this is one of the main reasons why demand for housing outstrips supply.

With a growing gap between owners and renters, do politicians need to acknowledge that free movement of Europeans is not consistent with their domestic goals?

*Stefan Piotrowski, via email*

## Contributions welcome

Peter Kellner (“Between a rock and a hard place,” October) reveals record levels of public concern about immigration across Europe, especially in Britain, but it is important to understand nuances in public attitudes.

The Prime Minister does not need to choose between being a hardline sceptic and a fatalistic internationalist. Instead, he should be building a contributory-based immigration system. That means welcoming those who will contribute economically and culturally—from international students to skilled workers—which even a majority of Conservative voters do not want to see reduced. At the same time, it means ensuring we do not have migrants coming to the UK because of our welfare system. The Prime Minister is therefore right to request from the EU during the current renegotiation that the UK be allowed to make EU migrants wait at least four years before they claim any benefits, in or out of work.

*Ryan Shorthouse, Director of Bright Blue*

## Changing of the guard

It is tempting to agree with Josef Joffe (“Allergic to power,” October) when he says that Germany has completed an enduring cultural transformation which has made it “allergic to power and as aggressive as a sloth.” He suggests the failure to translate vast assets into power is due to the absence of an imperial

class and culture. The next generation of political leaders and decision makers aren’t imperial, but I observe a growing self-confidence, global awareness and sure footedness. Those brought up after unification will no longer see it as their duty to keep picking up the bill. But they will be willing to translate assets into assertiveness without becoming aggressive. And that’s a good thing.

*Gisela Stuart, Labour MP*

## Home truths

Iran needs investment and technology (“Iran: open for business? Not yet,” October). But it’s clear the pragmatists running Iran, including President Hassan Rouhani, have a sophisticated approach. The bigger challenges are at home. Iran has a rapidly ageing population, with far fewer under-25s, for example, than most Arab countries. And its private sector is stifled by unfair competition from privileged businesses run by religious foundations and the Revolutionary Guards.

*Kelly Golnouch Niknejad, Co-founder, The Iran Media Group*

## Wrong number

The Houses of Commons and Lords could, and in the latter case should, be smaller than now, though not for the reasons which Chris Hanretty advances in his embarrassingly muddled article (“Cut the Commons to 400 MPs,” October). His mathematically based case completely leaves out the question of the functions of Parliament.

The House of Commons is not the same as, say, the French National Assembly or the US Congress for the simple reason that members of the executive are also members of the legislature, as, by definition, are members of the alternative executive sitting on the opposition benches. That alone pushes up the size of the legislature if you are also to have a sufficient number of MPs to hold the executive to account.

Moreover, unlike many other legislatures, particularly in countries with federal systems and strong sub-national institutions and local authorities, MPs in the UK are expected to devote a lot of their time to their constituencies

and their constituents’ problems.

There is a strong case for reducing the number both of ministers and of MPs, and for a second chamber to represent the nations and regions, but this cannot be done without thinking about functions and roles.

*Peter Riddell, Director, Institute for Government*

## The City knows best

John Kay (“Is the City worth it?” October) challenges claims about the value of the financial services industry to Britain. He claims that significant revenue derives from the earnings of City employees. That may be the case, but recent research suggests more than half of the £31.1bn total tax contribution of the banking sector derives from foreign-owned banks.

On exports, Kay points to a surplus of more than 2 per cent of GDP. This has grown fourfold since the Big Bang in the 1980s. A small proportion of the activities of the Square Mile relates to the demands of UK companies and it was ever thus.

The bulk of its customers now are multinational firms and institutions. It is the concentration of decision makers, deep pools of liquidity and the associated high-value professional services activities which combine to make the UK such an attractive place for them. Aren’t the world’s finance directors, corporate treasurers and asset managers who conduct business in London better placed than John Kay to judge the value of the City?

*Richard Woolhouse, Chief Economist at the British Bankers’ Association*

## Right on time

Clive James’s article on Joseph Conrad is the best of the best of *Prospect* (“His greatest victory,” October). It comes right on cue as we witness the unravelling of tested European borders.

The mix of misery, violence and farce underlines a facet of human nature that Conrad knew well, and which it is dangerous to ignore: the mass of humanity is tribal, and the claims of self, family and society will always trump demands from outsiders.

*Ian Bruton-Simmonds, via email*

## In fact

Of all homeowners over 65 in Britain, last year only 1 per cent moved house.

*Daily Mail, 7th September 2015*

The Atacama Desert in Chile hasn’t seen a drop of rain since records began. It is the driest place on earth.

*National Geographic, August 2013*

Everyone has a unique tongue print, just like fingerprints.

*Buzzfeed, 26th March 2014*

China used more cement in three years (6,615m tonnes between 2011 and 2013) than the US used in an entire century (4,405m tonnes between 1900 and 1999).

*BBC, 21st September 2015*

President Obama’s Secret Service code name is “Renegade”.

*Mail Online, 13th November 2008*

Einstein’s theory of relativity dictates that the closer you are to the centre of the Earth, the slower time goes—and this has been measured. At the top of Mount Everest, a year would be about 15 microseconds shorter than at sea level.

*Buzzfeed, 26th June 2015*

A full Kindle weighs a billionth of a billionth of a gram more than an empty one.

*The Guardian, 26th October 2013*

Ten per cent of all the photos ever taken were taken in the last 12 months.

*BBC Radio 2, 30th September 2015*

Winds in the northern hemisphere have slowed by up to 60 per cent in the last 30 years.

*Nature, 17th October 2010*



*"We don't expect you to be married to your job but the odd date might be nice."*

# FINANCIAL & SPORTS SPREAD BETTING FROM ONE ACCOUNT



Join today at **WWW.SPREADEX.COM**



GET THE APPS FOR  
SMARTPHONE OR TABLET

**SPREAD EX**

Trade Up

Spread bet losses can exceed deposit



# Opinions

Bronwen Maddox

## Osborne the nation builder

Ambitious but vulnerable



The chance to build a bridge and point to it after you've left office—that is the kind of thing that US senators sometimes say gives them the best job in American politics (with more practical power than the President). The clunky refrain “we are the builders” with which George Osborne hammered home his speech to the Conservative Party conference is not a high point of modern political rhetoric, but it has its uses: he's offering a very tangible legacy, built before your eyes.

The central planks of the Chancellor's speech set out ambitious goals for a modern country—and for modernising it further. More devolution of power to cities and councils, enabling them to compete for business; more apprenticeships; and a commitment both to defence and aid. The tone was international, confident, often radical, not invoking Broken Britain but acknowledging a list of problems which he proposed practically to fix.

The question will now be whether the

Chancellor can deliver on the construction contract he has written, as well as on the wider goal he shares with David Cameron of seizing the centre ground of British politics, or whether he will be tripped up both by the severity of the cuts he proposes and by economic factors beyond his control.

The building pledges themselves are not without hazard. Houses are almost the easiest, given the consensus behind the need (see our cover story, by Andrew Adonis, the Labour peer last month). Sceptical mutterings that money for the Northern Powerhouse might never appear may have been dispelled, at least for now, by the publicity of Osborne's commitment.

But he left the case for his proposed new National Infrastructure Commission undeveloped; the most substantial thing about it is Adonis, lured from the Labour benches to be its first chairman (becoming a cross-bencher in the process). Without money, it can do little, except evaluate projects to be run by Whitehall and paid for by private

money, often foreign. The aim is presumably that it gives impetus and endorsement to projects, including the most controversial (and Adonis is firmly in favour of HS2). But as John Kay's demolition job on Howard Davies's and the Airport Commission's economic modelling shows (p42), the quality of advice given to governments can be poor, concealed by over-specific models which pretend to a confidence about the future that no one can sensibly hold. That is an affliction which tends to find a natural host in bodies such as national infrastructure commissions.

Osborne's vulnerabilities are clear. Boris Johnson noisily joined David Davis's challenge to the speed of the proposed removal of tax credits for those on low pay. It's probably hyperbole to say, as Davis did, that it could provoke public reaction like the poll tax, but it might well be like the response to Gordon Brown's ill-fated abolition of the 10p tax band. Combined with measures after the election to lift inherit-





ance taxes, it gives ammunition to those who say the Conservatives protect the well-off when sharing out the pain of cuts. The question now is whether Osborne will, in the Autumn Statement, ease up on these cuts if growth continues; there is a strong case that he should.

But growth may weaken, and the effects of China's slowdown are a wild card. While Treasury officials say that recent revenues have been surprisingly strong, there is concern over the current account deficit—the gap between what Britain imports and what it exports. Far from building and making lots of goods, Britain is exporting services, such as finance, and continuing to buy the world's goods.

Osborne's second ambitious theme was that the Conservatives "are the only true party of labour." An audacious land grab, but the rate of job creation gives it sub-

stance. It is unfair, as successive reports from the Office for National Statistics show, to dismiss these new jobs as all low paid or self-employed.

But it is not just job creation that he seeks. The aim, he says, is to "give Britain a pay rise... that it deserves." He is right in his diagnosis of a persistent problem: the failure of productivity and therefore wages to rise, while the welfare system is not always directed at those who most need it and does not always encourage work.

He wants, by cutting business taxes, to encourage businesses to put up wages. It remains to be seen, though, whether they will pay any attention to his moral lecture that they should do so. His prescription, unless it provokes an unusually fast change in behaviour from employers as well as workers, could hurt a lot of the less

well off very hard.

Osborne showed in his first term far more agility and sensitivity than his rhetoric implied. He was the Austerity Chancellor in words, but not in actions. The election victory showed that 11.3m people supported or at least tolerated that plan. But given how much he softened the first term plan, it's hard to know now whether to expect the same again—or whether he will indeed carry out the scale of cuts he describes. And on his ambitions of succeeding Cameron, he has delivered a sophisticated and ambitious speech about helping Britain change, beginning with the most concrete steps. The question is whether his image as the Austerity Chancellor—and the reality of the cuts he proposes in achieving that change—obstruct that vision of the future.

*Bronwen Maddox is Editor of Prospect*

Kate Barker

## The answer to the mess of property tax

Here's the way to make housing more affordable



Tax reform is a crucial part of the solution to the UK's housing problems. Some proposals—such as taxing sites with unbuilt planning permissions—come around frequently despite their lack of merit. Improvements in the taxation of housing have little attraction for politicians, as they need to be gradual—so they don't offer quick fixes—and are controversial.

Tax proposals should come from a clear diagnosis of the housing market. The key issues can be expressed simply, although details may differ according to location. Because England is densely populated, we are reluctant to build as much new housing as rising incomes and a growing population demand. Consequently the price of housing space tends to rise relative to incomes.

The expectation that price rises will continue encourages first-time buyers to stretch their mortgage capacity and older homeowners to remain in larger houses. These incentives are enhanced as principal residences are free from capital gains tax and increasingly from inheritance tax.

Housing has a particular combination of features. It is regarded as a good to which all should have access. It is both a consumption good and a long-term investment and new supply carries environmental costs. Arguably the consumption of housing is already taxed, through council tax, but this bears little relation to housing values. Investment returns to owner-occupiers are little-taxed. VAT is not charged on new housing, though it is levied on renovations and extensions. Finally, stamp duty is charged on housing transactions, though most economists

regard this as a bad tax in principle.

Tax changes are needed that encourage more housing supply (including expansion of the existing stock) and discourage housing as an investment (although to some extent housing will always be part of financial planning). I'll make five proposals.

First, it's often argued that a land value tax would boost new housing supply, and there is a case for such a tax at a low level for reasons of equity. However, the planning system means that there is already a very large incentive to use land for housing, so unless this tax were rather high it is unclear that it would change new supply significantly (although it would lead to an immediate fall in land values). More helpful would be to tax vacant or underused brownfield land as typically these are areas the planning system wishes to see brought into use. Revenue from this tax could fund a reduction in stamp duty. Adjusting the duty rates can be a useful tool for short-term housing market management.

Second, there is a troubled history of taxes on development gains—as every site is different, it is hard to devise a charge that is simple and effective. Too much is expected from new construction in terms of infrastructure contributions; it would be better to look to the existing stock of property.

A revaluation of property for council tax purposes is overdue. Since this exercise will create losers, changes should be brought in gradually to avoid market disturbance. This should be coupled with adding more bands to council tax at the top, and phasing out the single person discount, or at least making it

less generous. The increased revenue would then fund better infrastructure.

Third, VAT on significant renovation or extensions should be abolished, to support densification and better use of the existing stock. Fourth, keeping council tax more in line with housing values will complicate local government finance, but reduce the incentive to use homes as investments.

A radical tax change would be the introduction of a capital gains tax, starting from these new valuations, charged at the time of the last lifetime sale.

This would bring complexity, including to the valuation basis for mortgage lending, but would be a really important shift away from allowing the unearned house price gain to accrue to the homeowner. It would also signal to landowners that future land price rises will be more limited.

Five, the taxation and regulation of the private rented sector should be reviewed to ensure landlords are not unduly favoured by the tax system.

New housing is often locally unpopular, but we need to increase new supply. With the Conservatives apparently set for a long period of power, we should start moving towards a system of housing taxation that would encourage better use of existing stock, provide more funds for infrastructure and discourage the investment motive in house purchase. Without this it is hard to foresee a housing market which works better for today's young people.

*Kate Barker is an economist and a former member of the Bank of England's Monetary Policy Committee*

Diane Roberts

# The man who can't be parodied

America created Trump but now it can't control him



The great Tom Lehrer once said that Henry Kissinger's 1973 Nobel Peace Prize "made satire obsolete." Happily, Lehrer was wrong. Richard Nixon, Ronald Reagan, Margaret Thatcher, Bill Clinton, Tony Blair and the UK's "Etonocracy" continue to provide an *embarras de richesse* for political comics. If Donald Trump remains the Republican front-runner all bets are off. Satire may be made redundant. Trump is a cornucopia of frenetic egotism. You can't parody him. The best you can do is quote him. He's not a joke: though his poll numbers are slipping somewhat, he still beats "serious" candidates such as Governor Jeb Bush and Senator Marco Rubio, and has a few billion in the bank to spend on his campaign. He still draws restive crowds who are convinced that Barack Obama is a Muslim, Mexican rapists are marching across the Rio Grande and that the government is coming for their guns. Trump reflects their rage back at them; the rest of us look on in fascinated horror, the way one might watch a python devour a wildebeest.

Donald Trump is the untethered id of white America, the embodiment of the lurking fear of a world where women, blacks, Latinos, gays, welfare-scrungers and the "politically correct" get special privileges while decent, honest, white Christians suffer. When Trump says he will "take America back," he means back to the time when white men ruled, a woman's highest ambition was to be beautiful and marry a rich guy like himself, people of colour knew their place, and the rest of the world—particularly the Chinese and the Russians—lived in mortal terror of American nukes.

Trump promises to "make America great again." Just like it says on his baseball caps (\$25 from the Trump campaign website, \$30 if you want it in camouflage), and on the cover of his new paperback, *Time to Get Tough*. I say "new," though it's actually a reissue of his campaign manifesto from 2011 back when he first toyed with running for president, but decided to renew his contract to appear on *Celebrity Apprentice* instead. In it, he rails against \$5-a-gallon gasoline (the current price is close to \$2), assures us that the Patient Protection and Affordable Healthcare Act will be "a total disaster," driving the nation to bankruptcy and confidently predicts that former Congresswoman Michele Bachmann, currently under investigation for misusing campaign money, has "a great political future."

Yes, a bit of updating would have been nice. But the book's real point is to remind you that Trump has the "best hotel in New

York," the "most beautiful woman in the world" for his wife and the "greatest" companies in America. Trump is a winner, as he'll be the first to tell you. The second, third, and fourth to tell you, too. When he gets to the Oval Office, America will "win so much you may get bored with winning." He will tear up the Iran agreement, then "go to Iraq and take the oil." He'll teach China a sharp lesson by slapping a 25 per cent tax on their goods, unless they cease manipulating their currency and desist from hacking. He'll ditch Obamacare and replace it with "something terrific." He'll build a vast wall across America's southern border with Mexico and force their government to pay for it. Then he'll deport 11m illegal immigrants.

His platform today is remarkably consistent with the one from five years ago: close the border, revoke free trade and "take out" Islamic militants. He indignantly points out (via the Heritage Foundation) that nearly two-thirds of Americans below the poverty line have cable TV, nearly 75 per cent have a car and 80 per cent have air-conditioning. He quotes Dinesh D'Souza, who once pointed out that in America many of the poor are obese. So how "poor" can they be?

It does not dawn on Trump that poverty often means eating the worst kinds of junk food, or that his wild posturings do not amount to a plan of action. Instead, he struts and preens, telling the faithful that a President Donald J Trump will show Russia, China, Europe and every other low rent parcel of the planet that while the US under Obama is a "laughing stock," he will build up America's defences to the point that the whole world will be terrified of her. He never served in Vietnam, what with his four student deferments, but he did attend a military prep school, which is nearly the same thing.

Trump never tells us how he will achieve these ends. Nor does he acknowledge the two other branches of government, the Congress and the Courts, which often throw a spanner into the works of the executive. Details are for losers. Trump does, however, use his book to settle scores. Television presenter Bryant Gumbel is a "clown" for doing a story on environmental opposition to Trump International Golf Links in Scotland, which Trump refers to as the "greatest golf course in the world." He calls *Saturday Night Live* star Seth Myers a "third-rate comedian" because Meyers made fun of Trump at the White House Correspondents's Dinner, cracking, "Donald Trump often talks about running as a Republican, which is surprising. I just assumed he was running as a joke."

Trump is angriest at the president whom he labels a "trainwreck." Why? Largely because, as Trump fusses in *Time to Get Tough*, "I tried to make a \$100m gift to the United States government, but Barack Obama wouldn't even return my phone call."

See, Trump wanted to build a \$100m extension, "one of the great ballrooms of the world," on to the White House. For free and everything, but nobody called him back.

America created Trump, the monster love-child of reality TV and narcissism. Now America can't control him. He won't become president, but he will continue to crash his way through American political culture, voicing the anger at what conservative pundit Jonah Goldberg calls the "trumpenproletariat." Does Trump really want to be President or is this all just an elaborate marketing campaign? Who knows? Trump may not even know. I'll give him this: in *Time to Get Tough*, he articulates an undeniable truth of our celebrity economy: that "you can be a horrible human being, you can be a truly terrible person, but if you get ratings, you are a king." It remains to be seen if this is also true of our political system.

Diane Roberts is a professor of English at Florida State University and a commentator on America's National Public Radio

"Time to get tough" is published only in the US, by Regnery



Sam Tanenhaus

# Talking trash with the Republicans

Trump's fights with the other candidates are keeping America interested



Who knew politics could be so much fun? After nearly seven years of exhausting the public's patience with unceasing attacks on Barack Obama and the Democrats, Republicans have found a rich new target: themselves. Credit the trash-talking "outsider" presidential candidates—Donald Trump, Ben Carson and Carly Fiorina. Collectively, their political experience adds up to zero—days in office, that is. Only one of the three has even been a candidate before: Fiorina, for Senate in 2010. She was thrashed, "lost in a landslide," Trump chortled, also noting that "she did a terrible job at Hewlett-Packard" (as CEO).

It's "blunt and cruel," the columnist Frank Rich pointed out. And it has helped boost Trump to the top of national polls, which is why the others have been slapping back. The normally mild-mannered Senator Lindsey Graham has called Trump a "complete idiot." Louisiana Governor Bobby Jindal described him as "unstable, narcissistic, egomaniac."

The Republican Party has come, or fallen, a long way since the days when Ronald Reagan, the party's patron saint, genially enforced the so-called 11th commandment, "thou shall not speak ill of any fellow Republican" (unless, of course, it was

Reagan's hated rival, Gerald Ford).

But 21st-century insult comedy is playing well with the public. The first televised Republican debate, on Fox News, drew 24m viewers, a record in the history of cable news programming. The second, on CNN, drew so much advance interest that advertising rates soared to \$150,000 per 30-second "spot," prompting the network to add extra time, so viewers could enjoy almost three full hours of sniping and one-upmanship, if very little concrete discussion of income inequality, student-loan debt, mounting tensions between the police and African-Americans in cities, issues Democrats have been emphasising in policy speeches and campaign appearances.

The fear is that the act will grow stale, and the new Republican cast will prove as tone-deaf an ensemble as the "clowns" of 2012 (Herman Cain, Michele Bachmann). But this year's acrimony reflects broader hostilities. Americans remain fiercely at odds about the proper scope of the federal government, and the war has divided Republicans against themselves. The latest threat by ideologues in Congress to shut down the government—this time over the small sums annually given to Planned Parenthood, the women's health organisation which gives advice on abortions—cost the House Speaker, John Boehner, the nation's top-ranking legislator, his job, creating a succession battle that is almost certain to drive the Republican House even further to the right and further from the mainstream.

The spectacle has caused the public to go sour on politicians. And now politicians are souring on one another—and on the rituals of politics.

When Trump barked to a South Carolina audience of businessmen, "I'm

so tired of this politically correct crap," he meant his opponents, Jeb Bush and Marco Rubio, Florida allies turned adversaries. The two are vying for the backing of the state's Republican operatives as well as for millions in campaign funding, and yet disguise their growing enmity in the elaborate courtesies of "politician speak." The plain fact, said Trump, is that the two "hate each other... but they can't say it... Maybe that's what you want and maybe that's the kind of people that are going to get elected, to be honest."

Thus, the appeal of talking trash. It offers an exit—or temporary relief—from the degradations of the long nominating "process," with its hyper-cautious and poll-tested messaging. "It used to be, there was truth and there was falsehood," Michael Kinsley, the political journalist, pointed out in 2007. "Now there is spin and there are gaffes." And the effect is paralysing, especially in a continuous news cycle ruled by websites (*Breitbart*, *Politico*, *Talking Points Memo*) which deliver scoops almost hourly; social media which circulate them virally within seconds; YouTube, Instagram, and iPhone recorders which provide the fateful images and sound-bites in their original raw state.

The history of 21st-century elections is a haunting laugh-track of self-inflicted wounds—moments, in Kinsley's oft-quoted definition of the gaffe, when a candidate "accidentally reveals something truthful about what is going on in his or her head." In 2008, President Barack Obama was caught theorising about the resentments of middle-Americans who "cling to guns or religion or antipathy toward people who aren't like them." He said he was sorry and survived. Four years later, Mitt Romney disparaged nearly half the citizenry, the "47 per cent who are... dependent upon government, who believe that they are victims." He half-apologised—and lost the election.

All this has left us with a strange paradox—a harshly polarised electorate, seething with conflict and discord, but whose leaders still burble the old clichés about "getting things done" and "reaching across the aisle." Republican trash-talkers are keeping the public interested with their outbursts of unscripted candour. Some even seem to relish saying what they really think—of one another, at least. And that's a start.

Sam Tanenhaus, whose next book will be a biography of William F Buckley Jr, will write a regular column for Prospect throughout the US Presidential election

Anatole Kaletsky

# The greatest threat since the banking crisis

And it's all down to one country



The government's latest solution for sluggish economic growth and possible isolation from Europe has been the promise of surging trade with China. But just as George Osborne was kow-towing to Chinese politicians and businessmen on his summer sales trip, China plunged into financial turmoil. This raised an alarming question: has the world economy's main engine of growth since the 2008 crisis, become the biggest threat to global recovery?

Three separate blows hit China over the summer: economic weakness, financial turmoil and government blunders in response to these shocks. The risk from China stems not from any one of these problems, but from the interaction of the three: weak economic data has led to turmoil in financial markets, which has triggered clumsy political reactions, which in turn have provoked financial panic, which may now lead to further economic setbacks. This self-reinforcing feedback loop now threatens the global economy.

Were it not for the interaction of economic data, financial panic and policy blunders, the Chinese slowdown would in itself be neither surprising nor alarming. China's growth rate has been declining steadily from a peak of 11 per cent in 2010 to between 6 and 7 per cent this year. This slowdown is not surprising because double-digit growth was bound to become unsustainable as China graduated from extreme poverty and technological backwardness—with insatiable requirements for housing and government-led infrastructure investment—to a middle-income country with growth powered by consumer spending and private enterprise.

A slowdown from 10 per cent growth to 7 per cent today and 4 or 5 per cent by the end of the decade has long been predicted.

.....



*"Don't do anything silly that might send shivers through the stockmarket."*

A steady slowdown has been the official policy of Xi Jinping's government, which has recognised that the enormous size of today's Chinese economy makes the turbo-charged growth of the past environmentally unacceptable, as well as mathematically almost impossible. This is because a growth rate of 6 or 7 per cent in today's \$11 trillion Chinese economy contributes more to global economic activity—and absorbs more natural resources—than did the 11 per cent growth rate of the previous decade, which started from a base of only \$2.3 trillion in 2005.

Why then has China's slowdown caused disquiet? China's weakness has been concentrated in heavy industry, mining, property and exports—and the bad news from these sectors, some of which really are collapsing, is much more visible than unexciting reports about services and consumer spending, which remain fairly strong. For example, while construction has plunged by 15 per cent and steel output by 5 per cent from a year ago, retail sales are 11 per cent higher and service output is up by 12 per cent.

Because the declining sectors are smaller than the industries that are expanding, Chi-

**“Many investors have concluded that China is falling into recession, with dire implications for financial and social stability”**

na's officially reported growth rate of 7 per cent is closer to the truth than the much lower, sometimes negative, figures bandied about by Western analysts. Such claims ignore the strength of consumption and “new economy” services as government fabrication or wishful thinking. Instead they extrapolate from the “hard” evidence of heavy industries such as coal, steel, cement and power generation, which are suffering from excess capacity and long-term structural decline.

As a result of this bias, many investors have concluded that China is falling headlong into recession, with dire implications for financial and social stability—and even perhaps for Communist Party control. Although no such recession is actually on the horizon, the stockmarket collapsed in the summer, followed by a run on the previously stable Chinese currency, the Renminbi (RMB).

These upheavals have inspired a panic-stricken political response: first a failed gov-

ernment attempt to prop up share prices that cost over \$200bn; then a half-hearted currency devaluation, which only encouraged Chinese companies and individuals to exchange more RMB for dollars, on fears that a bigger devaluation lay ahead.

These incoherent policy reactions are what really justify anxiety about China's future. Until this summer, the general assumption about China was that competent technocrats were skilfully directing the economy, thereby compensating for the political deficiencies of Communist dictatorship. This confidence in Chinese economic management has now disappeared.

This loss of confidence is potentially disastrous because China now faces an extremely challenging economic transition that will require three partly-conflicting objectives to be juggled with extraordinary skill. In the next decade, China must not only create a market-based consumer economy far less reliant on heavy industry and government-controlled investment. It must do this while cleaning up its banks and opening up its financial system. And it must achieve both these objectives while managing an orderly slowdown instead of the economic collapse that has often accompanied industrial restructuring and financial liberalisation in other countries.

To navigate successfully through this trilemma of restructuring industry, liberalising finance and maintaining economic expansion will require a skilful and pragmatic juggling of priorities. That will be very difficult if Chinese policymakers lose the trust of international investors and, even more importantly, of their own businesses and citizens, leading to collapsing confidence, capital outflows, policy errors and more capital flight. This spiral occurred in the summer with the stockmarket and currency fiascos—most probably it will soon stop. If the RMB stabilises and the capital flight out of China dwindles, as appeared to be happening by late September, the financial turbulence in China will be seen as a storm in a teacup, and we can all breathe a sigh of relief.

But if China's economic management cannot regain credibility, the world economy really will face its greatest threat since the 2008 banking crisis. As we learned in 2008, a self-reinforcing interaction of economic setbacks, policy blunders and financial panic could turn otherwise manageable problems into a global financial crisis—this time Made in China.

Anatole Kaletsky is Chairman of the Institute for New Economic Thinking





# Never miss that... “we’d like to offer you the contract” call.

## BT One Phone

Every time the office phone rings it could be an amazing opportunity on the other end. But what if no one’s there to take the call? With BT One Phone, your employees can handle all their landline calls through their mobiles, so it’s easy for them to take every call, especially the really important ones.

Find out how BT One Phone can help your business never miss that call.

0800 731 8173

[bt.com/business/thatcall](http://bt.com/business/thatcall)



AC Grayling

# Is privacy a thing of the past?

The problem of embracing technology



When any of the major marathons is being run, someone appropriately mentions the event that inspired them: how news was taken from Marathonos, 26 miles from Athens, of the defeat of Darius I of Persia when he invaded Greece in 490 BC. It was carried by a runner, Pheidippides, one of the commonest methods of sending messages in those distant days.

Another method, as the opening scene of Aeschylus's *Agamemnon* memorably recounts, is by beacon fire, visible from one hill top to another in a long chain. Beacons were swifter than runners, thus representing a technological advance in communications. Gradually, but with increasing power and pace in modern times, humanity has moved from runners, the pony express, telegraphy and airmail to mobile telephony and social media.

The instantaneity and facility of communication today—sending words, images and sound at the speed of light from one hand-held device to another or many others, and very cheaply—is many orders of magnitude away from Pheidippides in utility. That is why we embrace the technologies that make it possible. In a flash they have become necessities. We live with our devices constantly at hand, and at any time of day or night employ them to get and give information and to make contact.

The benefits are huge. The price paid for them is even greater: these technologies have stripped us naked to the view of any public or private agency that wishes to know about us. The knowledge acquirable by eavesdropping on our communications, searches, entertainment, purchases and other activities in the electronic universe, is

practically unlimited.

Privacy is therefore a thing of the past for all but those who refuse any truck with these innovations. We are now dependent on the sense of responsibility that can be mustered by eavesdropping agencies, and such restraint as Canute-like attempts at regulation can achieve.

The main reason is that the explosion in communications has created a pressing need for security agencies to monitor them. The point is insistently made that because there are people out there intent on mass murder, and because governments have a responsibility to protect citizens, pre-emptive eavesdropping on communications is a necessity. If true, this shows that our embrace of these wonderfully useful technologies is a Faustian contract: the light they shine casts deep shadows.

What can be done? It might be argued that regulation is better than no effort at restraint on eavesdropping. We might not be able to stop all eavesdropping, including that necessitated by danger, but we can limit the potential for harm by policing it to the extent possible.

The problem here is that regulation can too easily subvert the good purposes which the technologies serve. We are right to be apprehensive that China-like draconian control of communications can do damage without enhancing security. To undermine civil liberties for the sake of security, and to fail to achieve it, would be the worst outcome.

What is the principle at stake here, and would the right kind of attention to it help resolve that tension? The principle concerns the balance of liberty and security.

Famously, Benjamin Franklin said that those who would forfeit their liberty for security deserve neither.

In the late 19th century, Lord Acton equally resoundingly announced that the highest duty of government is to protect the liberties of citizens. A decade or so ago David Blunkett, and other European interior ministers, published a joint letter in the *International Herald Tribune* claiming that the highest duty of government is to protect the safety of citizens. Reflection shows that it is Acton who is right. To keep us safe, governments would have to restrict our liberties drastically and invade all our privacies to ferret out those who intend to cause harm. Such security would not be worth having at such cost. Instead, there are two better answers: one bold, the other concessive.

The bold answer is that we have to say to ourselves, as members of a mature and civilised community, that liberties come with risks, and that we should accept those risks because our liberties are so worth having. The concessive answer is that yes, it is a high duty of government to protect us, and that means that in times of real danger we have to accept interference with our liberties, as happened in the Second World War; but the license for this must be temporary and kept under strict review, subject to short-term sunset clauses which require investigation of circumstances for renewal.

The two answers are consistent, and sensible. They do not solve the loss of privacy question, but they strike the balance that one part of the loss of privacy threatens to upset. <sup>12</sup>

AC Grayling is a philosopher, and Master of the New College of the Humanities

## The best of *Prospect* online

[www.prospectmagazine.co.uk](http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk)

The VW nightmare will continue for years, just as it did for the banks says

**Jonathan Evans**



I wouldn't rule out the emergence of a new political party, **Vince Cable** tells Serena Kutchinsky



Is Alexis Tsipras Greece's new Blair, asks **David Patrikarakos**





# TANNERS WINES

NOW OPEN IN CHESTER



150 CHRISTLETON ROAD  
CHESTER CH3 5TD  
TEL: 01244 343244

*Do come and see us at our new branch  
on Christleton Road just off the A55  
ring road.*

*You will find that we have been  
perfecting over four generations along  
with the friendly staff ready to give  
down-to-earth advice.*

- ◆ Free local delivery
- ◆ Tastings, sampling system & seating
- ◆ Great value for money
- ◆ Plenty of parking



**TANNERS**

WINE MERCHANTS  
ESTABLISHED 1842

*Independent family shippers of estate wines*

Large Independent Wine Merchant  
of the Year 2015/16

International Wine Challenge



# The Duel

## Is our definition of “refugee” too wide?



© JOACHIM SEIDLER / WIKIMEDIA ORD COMMONS

**YES** Europe's refugee crisis is also a crisis of moral and political over-reach. Over the past few decades the grounds for seeking refuge in Europe have been ever widened by well-intentioned lawyers with only a distant connection to democratic politics. Until now it was of little consequence because, despite spikes such as the 1990s Balkan wars, few people were able to reach Europe to claim that right to protection.

With the collapse of parts of Europe's external border the trickle could become an annual flood of one million or more. Unless we restore the borders, narrow the definition of refugee and insist that people apply outside Europe, the flood will become permanent.

The generous impulse of Europeans to help the persecuted could be easily realised when there were discreet crises involving finite numbers; East African Asians, Somalis, Bosnians, for example. But now, thanks to long-running conflicts and new communications and transport infrastructure, many more can and want to come. Our refugee laws now signal a greater openness than we are prepared to honour.

The 1951 Refugee Convention giving refugee status to those with “well founded fear of persecution” could now in principle be used by hundreds of millions. Protection now extends to anyone suffering “serious harm... as a result of indiscriminate violence in sit-

uations of international or internal armed conflict.” That means everyone living in a conflict zone: another few hundred million.

Not all will come, but by giving up on selecting the most vulnerable we have created a free for all with the most resourceful able to force their way in. We may feel sorry for Syrian doctors and engineers but in a world in which a child dies every minute from malaria they do not have first call on our generosity: their lives are not endangered in camps and they are the people Syria needs when the conflict ends.

One million people a year seems nothing for a continent of 500m, but the cumulative effect, coming on top of large scale legal immigration, could transform our societies in a few decades; leaving us less open and less willing to reach out to fellow citizens.

**NO** The EU definition of a refugee is narrower than that used in Africa—where it includes those fleeing “events seriously disturbing public order”—and across Latin America. In the EU, beyond the 1951 Convention, protection is afforded to those fleeing only some specified types of “serious harm,” including intense indiscriminate conflicts.

The definition is not the problem, displacement is. There are currently more displaced persons than since the end of the Second World War. Most (roughly 40m) are internally displaced persons (who are often

unable to flee), and 20m refugees of whom four million are Syrian. In a world of seven billion, their lack of protection is a problem of politics, not capacity.

This year, about half of those arriving in Europe by boat are Syrian, 12 per cent from Afghanistan, and 9 per cent from Eritrea. When people from these three countries claim asylum in the UK, Germany, or indeed Canada, (to take just one example of another country that applies the 1951 refugee definition), they tend to be recognised as refugees. In 2014, Canada recognised applicants from those three countries as refugees in around 90 per cent of cases.

The crisis in Europe demonstrates many political failures. To name just three: there is a crisis of legality, as some EU states breach their international obligations; a failure to support refugee protection outside and across Europe; and a humanitarian crisis of unsafe journeys by sea. Food aid to refugees in Turkey, Lebanon and Jordan was cut last year, and work and education rights are not guaranteed there. Refugees need a place to live, not somewhere to eke out a bare existence. They make dangerous boat journeys in desperation because of border controls. European visa requirements and carriers sanctions prevent them from using normal transport. Offering safe access to protection means lifting carrier sanctions, or issuing humanitarian visas.

A tiny proportion of the world's refugees seek protection in Europe, but if the largest and richest regional bloc in the world does not support the global regime, we cannot demand that other countries protect them.

**YES** Your view illustrates the detachment of legal idealism from the messy reality of politics. To assert rights on behalf of global migrants does not mean Europeans accept the obligations. This did not matter when few people could reach Europe. The lack of political legitimacy does matter now people are coming in such large numbers.

The 1951 Convention and its widening definition has been entirely lawyer-led, including the 1967 decision to extend its remit from Europe to the whole world. The fact that EU governments and the European Parliament ratified the "serious harm" directive of 2004 does not mean European citizens know about it or agree with it.

If France elected a racist government that persecuted minorities I have no doubt that we would open our doors to them, but we cannot and should not accept all those around the world—potentially hundreds of millions—who are caught up in conflicts.

Where I agree with you, is that we should end the catch-22 of proclaiming our willingness to protect, but refusing entry to those wanting to claim it. Europe's official front door is, as you say, largely closed, though the back door has been left flapping open.

The answer is to allow people to apply for asylum from outside Europe in embassies or refugee camps. Those accepted can travel here safely. This will work only if we select those whose lives are in immediate danger or who are suffering persecution. For everyone else the priority is to make life bearable in the camps. Most refugees stay close to their countries of origin. That should remain the case and we should fulfil our obligations with safe havens.

**NO** Your claim that protection should be given only to those in "immediate danger," ignores international law, and is simply unworkable.

Of the four million Syrian refugees, 95 per cent remain in four countries: Lebanon, Jordan, Turkey and Iraq. Your implication that most are in camps is—quite simply—wrong. A small fraction are in camps, the vast majority are living in whatever accommodation they can find. We agree much more aid should be given to support refugees in their regions of origin, but isn't Turkey in Europe? Your imagined world in which Lebanon, and other neighbours, can accommodate an unlimited number of refugees is contradicted by the facts. We cannot expect four countries to host 95 per cent of Syrian refugees, or contain them if they seek to leave.

It's not "idealism" to assert that EU states have obligations to refugees. The issue is that

our commitment is now being tested. Aside from providing protection to those who reach the territory, states may choose how they wish to support the refugee system. The UK gets comparatively few asylum seekers, currently 494 asylum seekers per million of its population, compared to Sweden's 8,365 and Germany's 2,513. It has opted out of the EU relocation plans, and its offer to resettle 20,000 Syrians from the neighbouring countries over five years is derisory.

How do you propose to end the deaths at sea? People in urgent need of protection are turning to Europe. How, in law and in conscience, do you suggest we turn them away?

**YES** Yes, I have been arguing that the premise of the current refugee regime, that you regard as a given beyond politics, is wrong!

Our definitions of who can claim protection, combined with an open door to those who are prepared to take some risks, is creating an incentive to move to Europe for the most mobile, and best educated, among the world's 60m displaced persons.

Yes we do need to turn some people away. They are in most cases already protected; they want our way of life. The current flow is not a symbol of European virtue. In the short term it relieves some pressure on poor neighbouring countries but the battle at our border fails to prioritise the most vulnerable, and it weakens poor and conflict-ridden states by stripping out their ablest citizens.

It is unfair on the EU border states and some voluntary burden sharing is in order, and why not from Japan and Saudi Arabia too? The UK has been less exposed to this refugee flow than the earlier Balkan one and should offer to take rather more than 20,000.

Most of us in rich countries want our governments to help but without too big a bill and without changing our societies too fast. We also want to help in a way that doesn't keep the bandwagon rolling, that means selecting the most needy from the neighbouring countries which should be incentivised to run large camps to high standards.

Most people in the aid world think it is better for displaced people to remain as close as possible to their countries. Do you disagree? If so how many should Britain take each year? Is a well-fed and sheltered Syrian engineer who can afford to pay to come to Europe more deserving of a right to start over than a starving child in Mali? If the rules insist that we give preference to the former because he can present himself at our door then the rules need changing.

**NO** I'm concerned this exchange will not have enlightened readers, so I include some references to works that inform my views.

EU law expands refugee protection beyond the 1951 definition, but not much.

The UNHCR's *Safe at Last* study showed the limited impact of its "indiscriminate violence" provision, sometimes being less protective than previous national law. Refugee protection is limited, many are being turned away, such as those from the Balkans, but Syrians, Eritreans and Iraqis tend to meet the refugee definition.

I am all for questioning legal categories and reforming them, but most who think deeply about the definition find it too narrow, such as my colleague Alexander Betts's work on survival migration. However, there is a key difference between refugees and other potential migrants. Obligations to the world's poor can be met with aid, but refugees need a status that allows them to start over.

To suggest refugees should wait in camps until wars end displays ignorance of past failures. Camps should only be a temporary measure. In the longer term, they keep refugees alive, but prevent them from living, as Elizabeth Dunn has put it. We are four years into the Syrian war. Protracted encampment and other forms marginalised limbo are a disaster both for refugees and host communities.

Looking ahead to re-building a peaceful Syria or a democratic Eritrea is all well and good; repatriation is an important part but complex of that process, as Katy Long's work has shown. But the crisis at Europe's borders is happening, now. Those concerned about the European crisis should focus on safe passage. If Europe plays its part it could lead a global initiative for further solutions, helping to create futures for many refugees.

Keeping refugees alive is not the same as letting them live. A small minority are turning to Europe. We are obliged to provide it. **P**

David Goodhart is Prospect's Editor-at-Large

Cathryn Costello is Andrew W Mellon Associate Professor of International Human Rights and Refugee Law, and a fellow of St Anthony's College

**P** Is our definition of "refugee" too wide? Vote now at [www.prospectmagazine.co.uk](http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk)  
Last month we asked *Prospect* readers: "Should the railways be renationalised?"  
They answered: **Yes 80% No 20%**



"Let's go around the room and say one interesting fact about ourselves"

# Features

Could Corbyn ever win?	Peter Kellner 24
What Labour should say	Philip Collins 27
The degeneration of Europe	Niall Ferguson 32
No way to plan an airport	John Kay 42
Every President's guru	Ferdinand Mount 46
Putin's aim in Syria	Rachel Polonsky 50
Myths about Africa	Alex Perry 54
The value of the natural world	Frances Cairncross 60
How to make a hit	John Harris 64

## Could Corbyn ever win?

Unlikely, but voters do like many of his left-wing policies

PETER KELLNER

**D**espite the avalanche of criticism from much of the media, and the bleak despair of many Labour MPs, Jeremy Corbyn exudes a calm, determined optimism. He and his supporters think their critics underestimate his appeal. They talk of a public yearning for his “new politics.” They believe his whole approach, combining new policies with a quieter, less brutal tone, will win the converts that the party needs to win in 2020. Could they be right?

Results from this month's YouGov/*Prospect* survey (see opposite) suggest that Corbyn is onto something. His style, and some of his policies, are going down well with many voters. He cannot be dismissed outright. That said, his path to power remains steep and rocky. Victory looks unlikely. But, then, winning his party's leadership looked equally improbable when he launched his campaign, so maybe we should not be too dogmatic about his chances.

Public reactions to Corbyn's agenda illustrate both his potential to advance and the hurdles in his path. We listed 15 policies associated with his campaign for the party leadership. Not all are likely to survive; he has already modified his stance on some issues and put others out to consultation. Yet our list shows clearly where voters are on his side and where they are not.

With six of the 15 policies we tested, supporters greatly outnumber opponents. What is striking is that, in conventional ideological terms, they are his six most left-wing policies: nationalisation of rail and energy companies, higher corporation tax, greater regulation of low pay and private rents, and local authority control of free schools and academies. Corbyn is tapping into

a broad public sentiment that is hostile not only to “old politics” but also to the way people with power outside government have (as most voters see it) used that power to benefit themselves rather than the wider public interest.

The issues on which Corbyn has failed to win over voters are rather different. His defence policies all get a clear thumbs-down: scrapping Trident, ruling out attacks on Islamic State in Syria and, more generally, reducing defence spending. Very few voters think Britain should leave Nato, something Corbyn has urged in the past, though not said recently. He also has only minority support for increasing significantly the number of refugees allowed to settle in Britain. Likewise with his desire for a united Ireland, though this is the policy proposal with by far the largest number of don't knows.

Apart from raising the minimum wage, which is immensely popular, Corbyn's redistribution agenda attracts few supporters. By almost two-to-one, voters reject his ambition to abolish the government's cap on welfare benefits. Nor do voters warm to the idea of a national maximum wage of £1m year (again, an idea floated by some supporters during his leadership campaign, though not one that he himself has proclaimed).

Our results on student tuition fees are intriguing. Corbyn has proposed higher taxes on companies and the rich to pay for the abolition of fees. As our survey finds widespread support for higher corporation tax, one can assume that, in isolation, this would attract broad approval. But would this be the most popular use of spare government cash? We tested this by pitching the abolition of tuition fees against a 3p rise in income tax. If voters really regard the abolition of fees as a priority, they would agree to higher taxes. They don't. As with ending the welfare cap, voters are wary of anything that might lead to a higher tax bill for themselves.

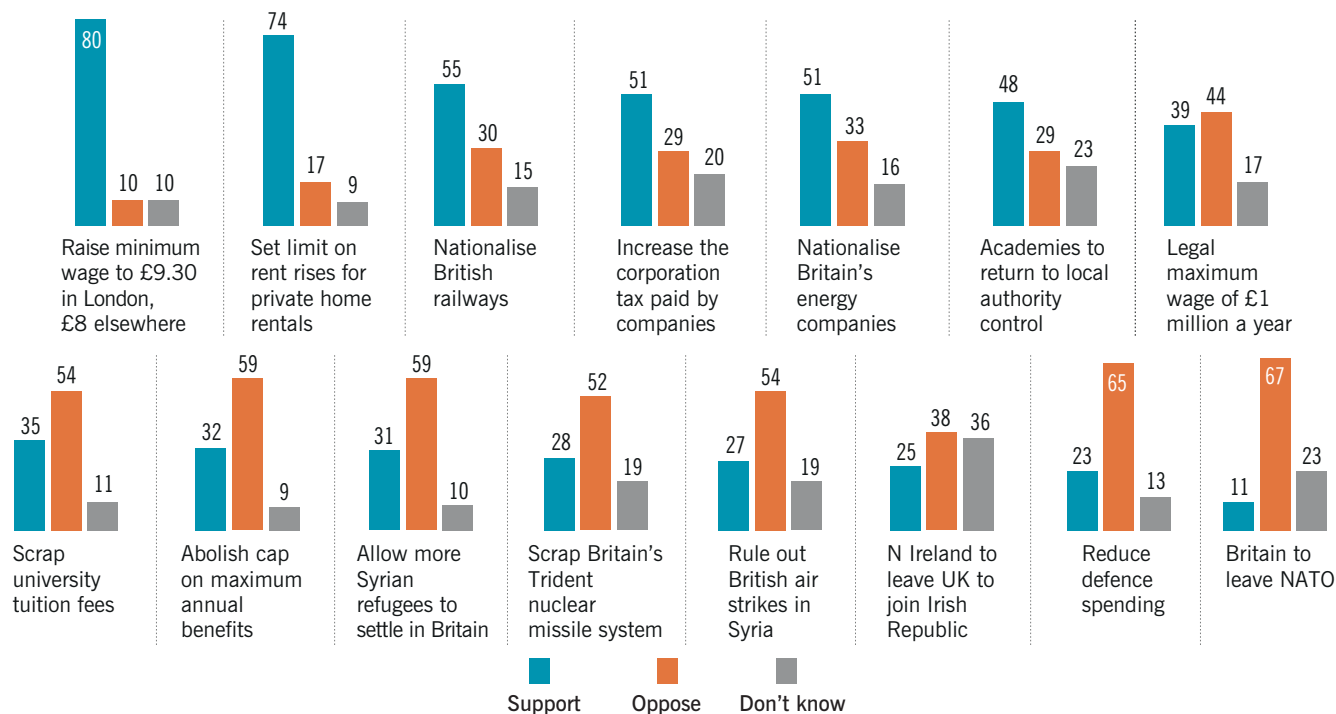
The simple way to summarise our policy findings is that they are a mixed bag. But there is more to it than that. The bag has some specific features: strong support for some of Corbyn's ►



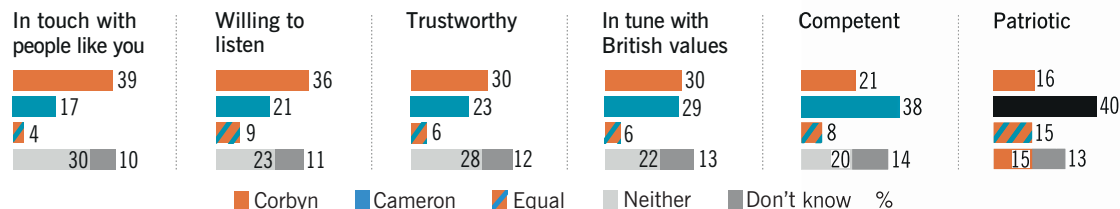


# Where Corbyn's winning—and losing

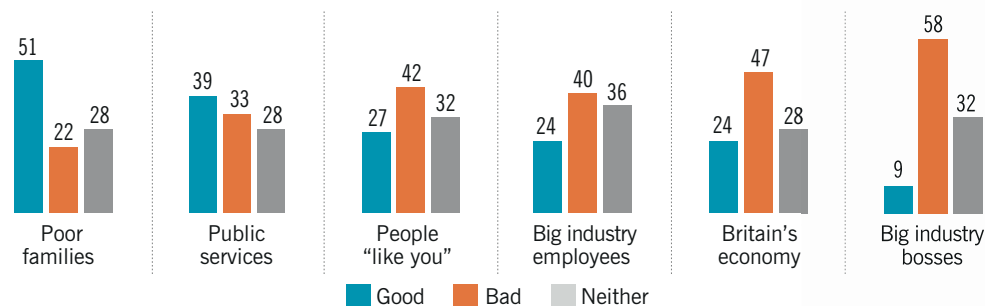
Do you support or oppose the following policies? %



Comparing David Cameron and Jeremy Corbyn, who is more?

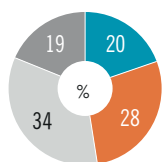


Do you think a Labour government led by Jeremy Corbyn would be good or bad for? %

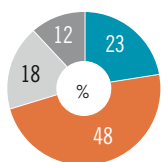


Comparing views on a potential Labour government forming, which of these statements came/comes closest to your view?

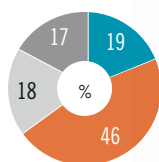
Labour govt. under Ed Miliband Sept 2010\*



Labour govt. under Ed Miliband April 2015\*



Labour govt. under Jeremy Corbyn Sept 2015



I would be Delighted Dismayed Don't mind Don't know

\*Previously asked about Ed Miliband



plans for curbing the market and expanding state control, but not for his international or tax-raising agenda.

As a thought experiment, let's suppose he responded to these findings by performing U-turns on defence, welfare, refugees, tuition fees and Ireland, and that he managed to persuade his own supporters that he was not betraying their dreams and his ideals. Would he then be on course to lead Labour to victory in 2020?

Probably not, at least not unless he managed to overcome other drawbacks detected by our survey. These are highlighted by a question about him that we asked from time to time during the last parliament about Ed Miliband. How do voters react to the thought of him becoming Prime Minister? Only 19 per cent say they would be delighted; far more, 46 per cent, say they would be dismayed, (a further 18 per cent wouldn't mind). That produces a net score of minus 27 (the percentage of delighted minus dismayed). Ed Miliband's score at the same, early point, in his party leadership was minus eight. By the time of this year's election campaign, Miliband's score had worsened to minus 25. So Corbyn does far worse than his predecessor at the same point in his leadership, and no better than when Miliband was on the

## “One crumb of comfort for Corbyn in these findings is that there are still large numbers of ‘don't knows’”

point of leading his party to a heavy defeat.

As other YouGov research has found, Corbyn generally has the worst initial rating generally of any new opposition leader since polls started monitoring them six decades ago. One major reason is that, while most voters like a number of his left-wing policies, they are not convinced that a Corbyn government will deliver greater prosperity for people like them. Not surprisingly, they reckon that it would benefit families on low incomes, and punish people who run big companies. By a narrow margin, they think public services such as schools and hospitals would benefit. But millions fear that Prime Minister Corbyn would be bad for workers, “people like you” and the economy overall.

The one crumb of comfort for Corbyn in these findings is that there are still large numbers of “don't knows” in this battery of questions, between 28 and 36 per cent. This suggests that a large part of the national jury is still out. Corbyn needs to convince it that he can make his popular policies work in practice. On the other hand, his critics—in the media and the Conservative Party—have not really got going in attacking the specifics of his programme. Those current “don't knows” may offer a possible upside for Corbyn, but they also threaten a downside.

In one specific sense, we have been here before. In the run-up to the 2005 general election, Michael Howard sought to exploit the fact that many of his specific policies were popular—on immigration, crime, welfare and so on. His slogan—“are you think what we're thinking?”—sought to exploit public support for his brand of populism.

Yet the Tories still lost heavily. For the third election in a row, Britain elected fewer than 200 Conservative MPs. One major reason was that Howard was seen as too right-wing. Some people who would endorse his social agenda in, say, a pub argument,

found the same policies less attractive in the mouth of a man auditioning to be Prime Minister.

Corbyn could face a similar problem. Other YouGov research finds an enormous gulf—far bigger even than Howard faced—between where most voters place themselves on a left-right scale (mainly near the centre) and where they place Corbyn. He is thought to be way out on the left, much further removed from the centre than Howard, on the right, was seen a decade ago. It's not that voters always reject extreme policies; but they prefer them to be implemented by moderate politicians, for this provides the reassurance that they are being carried out in order to further the national interest, rather than an ideological agenda.

The outcome could depend on the result of the character war that is sure to be fought over Corbyn himself. His “new politics” tone is certainly popular. Compared with David Cameron, voters regard Corbyn as more in touch with people like them, more willing to listen to other points of view and more trustworthy. These are important advantages. In principle, they could be exploited to persuade voters that he is a national, and not just a factional, leader.

However, Corbyn does less well on three other attributes. He made a point at Labour's conference of stressing his devotion to the best British values. Voters divide evenly on this when they compare the two leaders. And on patriotism, which Corbyn also claimed as a particular virtue, and competence, which always matters at election time, Cameron enjoys large leads.

Once again, there is plenty of time for public attitudes to change. And, of course, if Corbyn is still Labour's leader at the next election, he will be up against a new Tory leader. We shall see in due course how much difference this makes to the outcome of the character war. If he is to stand any chance of leading Labour to victory, he needs above all to sound and look like a Prime Minister. This means not just promoting popular policies and stressing his devotion to “new politics.” It also means dispelling fears that he is incompetent, extreme and unpatriotic—and also wearing a suit that fits, rather than an oversized jacket, ill-matched trousers and a badly knotted tie. Of course sartorial concerns shouldn't matter. After the revolution, comrade, let's hope they won't. Meanwhile, they do. **■**



*“Don't you just love how the press circle around Jeremy Corbyn?”*

# Here's a script for Labour

It should attack the government's analysis, not its motives

PHILIP COLLINS

**T**he Labour Party likes opposition more than it dare admit. There is a protest reflex in Labour which relishes the business of being against. Government is a troublesome business which inevitably compromises the purity of belief. In opposition, which demands no actions and no decisions but only words, Labour can remain intellectually unsullied. It can complain and shout and feel better about itself. There was more than a sense, during the 2010 parliament, that Labour, especially on the NHS and on welfare, was relishing opposition far too much.

The Labour Party is now governed by the professional protesters in its midst. Jeremy Corbyn can hardly ever have addressed a meeting in which the audience did not already agree with him before he began. He has never before had to trouble himself with deeds or win an argument with colleagues or set a collective line. He has never, in short, worked in politics before. He has worked in protest, which is a different occupation. Even opposition, official opposition of the sort that the Labour Party is constitutionally obliged to conduct in parliament, is quite distinct from protest. When the conference season finishes and the dust settles on Corbyn's extraordinary rise to prominence, he needs a strategy to oppose the government.

His natural inclination, and that of his closest consiglieres, will be to make exactly the error that Ed Miliband made before them. That is to characterise the government as expressly and malignantly ideological. This is so much the default assumption of Labour activists that it will be hard to resist. Hannah Arendt once said that the left always has a tendency to go for motive. It is the other side of the left's self-righteousness. If I am morally upright and on the side of the angels, then you, my sworn opponent, must be morally dissolute and singing the Devil's tunes.

Labour wasted a long time trying to pin ideological motivation on the Conservatives. They are shrinking the state with relish, privatising public services out of dismal conviction and impoverishing the least well-off out of class hatred. The trouble with this is that, not being anything like true enough, it sets a low bar for a government to jump over. David Cameron does not look or sound like a man consumed by belief, still less belief with deliber-

ately nasty intentions. The ideological accusations warmed the Labour Party but never rang true. They also have the parallel disadvantage of saying to people who have just voted Conservative that they are bad people. When victory depends on winning back the affection of some of these people, it is hard to imagine a more counter-productive political strategy.

Corbyn will have to steel himself to avoid making ideological vandalism his central accusation. The tone of his opposition, taking a cue from his first Prime Minister's questions, should be sorrow rather than anger. He should eschew personal attacks, as he has said he will, and seek to be forensic in his critique. He can, indeed he should, imply that the government cares too little for the travails of those who are not wealthy. His opposition can at times be emotional and heart-rending. There is nothing wrong

**“Corbyn should say that the Conservatives do not understand that inequality is a serious problem”**

in trying sometimes to induce a sense of shame in his opponents. But the tone should, throughout, be informed by a critique not of the motives of ministers but of their analysis and their competence. He will be regularly helped in that endeavour by the right of the Conservative Party, which will be tempted to take up the space they think is offered by a Labour shift to the left, by becoming recalcitrant. On Europe, on cuts and on the state of the economy, there could be internal trouble ahead. Indeed, unless Corbyn develops a credible strategy for opposition it will soon become established that the whole of politics is taking place within the Conservative Party, in the battle between its left and right flanks.

Corbyn's critique of the Cameron government should inform all the Labour opposition, in parliament and outside. It should be based on the accusation that the Conservative Party has the wrong analysis of the problems that confront Britain and a poor selection of priorities among those problems it does identify. The Conservative Party, he and his team should say, does not understand that inequality and unfairness are serious problems. Though Boris Johnson made some passing references to it in his speech to the Conservative party conference they were greeted with applause that it would be generous to call lukewarm. ▶

*Philip Collins is a former speechwriter for Tony Blair, a columnist for the Times and an Associate Editor of Prospect*







An anti-austerity protest during Conservative Party conference in Manchester in October. How should Jeremy Corbyn harness this passion?



The Corbyn critique can continue with the claim that the Tories do not take the lack of social mobility seriously enough. They believe, wrongly, that people on welfare are not keen to work and that immigrants are coming to Britain enticed by generous benefits and the attractions of having their illness treated by the NHS. These claims were all made by the Home Secretary, Theresa May, in an address to the Conservative conference that played both to the gallery and fast and loose with the facts. The Tories, Corbyn can quite authentically say, want to limit the high-skilled immigration that this country needs and they are obsessed with a damaging and pointless referendum on the European Union. Above all, they have not yet realised that, even if there ever was a danger point for the British economy, that has now passed and austerity is imposing a huge burden on the least

## “The beauty of the accusation of incompetence is that all governments are incompetent to some extent”

well-off and depriving the nation of investment in the public fabric that it urgently needs. The National Infrastructure Commission that George Osborne announced in Manchester is all very well, but it will be a pointless quango if no money is forthcoming.

The government, in other words, is damaging the country not as an act of malice but through an intellectual failure. It is asking the wrong questions, in the wrong order of priority and coming up with all the wrong answers. This critique can then be supplemented by the accusation, for which there will always be evidence, that the government is incompetent. The beauty of the accusation of incompetence is that all governments are incompetent to some extent. When an administration is acting on so many fronts, things are bound to go wrong. News thrives on error. There will always be mistakes to point out and peculiarities to mock. With luck, an opposition can link these incidents into a thread and an impression can be created that the government really does not know what it is doing.

This leads directly and naturally to another accusation that Corbyn can credibly level at the government which is that it is neglecting the necessary solutions to Britain's problems. Through a mixture of poor ability and the natural Conservative disposition of people who are lucky in life to believe that the status quo is fine, the government does not have the urgency needed in a country so rife with poverty and so in need of investment.

Note how an opposition really does have to choose between the accusation of ideological vandalism and the accusation of administrative incompetence. The public can only be scared by the ideology if the government is ruthlessly efficient at translating its diabolical desire into policy. The vandals really must be complimented at being very good at what they do. The accusation of incompetence, of course, undercuts the accusation of vandalism. A hopeless vandal does little damage. A choice has to be made and incompetence can always be illustrated. It is also, in the end, the weakness that debilitates a government. When it loses control of what it is doing the public tires. It is only in the fantasies of people who spend too long thinking about politics that governments change as a result of great ideological convulsions. The thing that will end this government will be losing control of events, either by losing the European referendum or by an economic disaster.

These are the tones and the colours on the canvas but the painting needs detail too. Before articulating the campaigns that embody his opposition, Corbyn needs to work out what topics would be better passed over in silence. There are always some questions, in the course of a parliament, which an opposition would prefer not to discuss. Or at the least would prefer not to carry too much of the burden of defining who they are. In that category, Corbyn ought to relegate most foreign policy questions. Labour will be so weak on defence and foreign policy that, though Corbyn will go through the motions, he would be advised to do little more. The best he can hope for is that this weakness should be neutralised. Corbyn's interview on *The Andrew Marr Show* in the week of the Labour Party conference showed that there is no position on, for example, Trident and the response to Vladimir Putin, that can hold the shadow cabinet together. Labour has, at the moment, two policies on Trident, one more than is feasible. The leader opposes this country's independent nuclear deterrent but the bulk of the shadow cabinet remain in favour and have threatened to resign if Corbyn imposes his will. The result is a fiasco and Corbyn has conceded that Labour may even go into the Scottish elections in May 2016 with no settled view at all. This is not new politics, it is just a mess. It means that, though it is never possible to avoid foreign policy questions altogether, indeed it is irresponsible to do so, it can hardly be an issue that Corbyn chooses to emphasise.

There is one other option for opposition which is not available to Corbyn, which is to claim authorship of some of what the government is doing, to erect a platform from which to criticise the rest of the programme.

The continuity between the Tony Blair years and the Cameron years is striking. The free school regime is a continuation of the academy programme. Jeremy Hunt has brought in Blair's former adviser Simon Stevens as the Chief Executive of NHS England, to continue the reforms begun under Alan Milburn who is, these days, the government's social mobility adviser. Gay marriage was an extension of the civil partnerships legislation. The national living wage is the minimum wage extended. Cameron has continued Blair's insistence that 0.7 per cent of GDP be spent on international aid. Now, Osborne has appointed Andrew Adonis to be the head of his new National Infrastructure Com- ▶



“It's quite an astute critique of the Labour Party for someone so young.”

THE BRITISH ACADEMY DEBATES

HEAR THE EVIDENCE • SHARE THE INSIGHTS • JUDGE THE ARGUMENTS

# ENERGY AND THE ENVIRONMENT

## FREE EVENTS

Edinburgh: 4 November

London: 24 November

## REGISTER NOW

[www.britishacademy.ac.uk/debates](http://www.britishacademy.ac.uk/debates)

#bigdebates



BRITISH  
ACADEMY

*for the humanities and social sciences*

Media Partner

**Prospect**

Supported by



The Climate Change  
Collaboration

In partnership with

THE  
**ROYAL  
SOCIETY**



mission, an idea that was in the Labour manifesto in 2015.

A sophisticated, confident opposition rooted in the political centre could claim credit for some of this. It could point out that the Tories have been educated by Labour and it took them a long while to catch up. That would have the twin virtues of sounding reasonable and reminding the nation that Labour achieved a lot in office. It would also give Labour the moral authority to say “given that you appear to do much as we tell you, here are your next lessons.” Those lessons could then be on tax credits, Europe, social care, poverty and housing. Labour, however, is in retreat from its own achievements. It has decided to disown its own victories. This was a process that Miliband began and which resulted in Labour being unable to defend its own record. That self-immolation has been confirmed by the selection of a leader who defines himself explicitly against every compromise, and therefore every success, that Labour achieved. Labour has become, in policy terms, a historical blank. To act like the government in waiting is not just a strategy that Corbyn has forsworn. He was chosen by his party precisely because they had tired of hard thinking of that kind. All of this leaves Corbyn in an inauspicious position. His instincts will take him in the wrong direction and his mandate rules out the best course of action. There is still plenty to go on, though and, in addition to the daily combat of the parliamentary calendar, Corbyn should organise his opposition around four major campaigns.

First, the Conservative Party will soon convulse itself in one of its periodic arguments about Europe. Cabinet ministers are making demands, especially on the free movement of people, which cannot hope to be realised in a negotiation of terms. It is possible that at least one senior minister, with an eye on the leadership of his or her party, will campaign for Britain to leave the European Union (EU). There appears no way for the Conservative Party to avoid division on a question which is of low priority for the British people. It is, of course, even possible that Cameron might accidentally take Britain out of the EU which would put his premiership in a perilous state. His Chancellor and possible successor, George Osborne, would be in no better a position, having led the failed campaign for a Yes vote. Corbyn needs to state, unequivocally and with some summoned enthusiasm, that Labour sees Britain's future within the EU. It can then set about exploiting the divisions in the governing party. The principal charge is not about Europe at all. It is that this irresponsible government is jeopardising Britain's prosperity for the sake of a battle that is purely about internal party management.

Second, there is a set of campaigns which, for want of a better term, Corbyn could mount on the theme of a Britain that, he can say, is broken. Into this category he can put the terrible state of social care, which the government is stalling on, the low priority allocated to mental health problems in the NHS, such decline



© JONATHAN BRADY/PA WIRE PRESS ASSOCIATION IMAGES

#### **Battle of Britain: Jeremy Corbyn meets David Cameron at a memorial service at St Paul's Cathedral in September**

in the performance of public services that can be attributed to spending cuts, the poor state of access to justice and the increasing level of child poverty. Then there should be a special campaign hoping against hope that the universal credit, the Godot of public policy, does, eventually, perhaps one day, appear.

Third, Corbyn would not be Corbyn if he did not conduct a campaign against austerity. It might resonate because public services have taken a lot of pain already and the second phase is going to feel punitive. The cuts may also bite at exactly the moment that the economy starts to turn down again. The first instance on which opposition can be mounted is the fact that the withdrawal of tax credits will impoverish some of the working poor who will not be compensated adequately by the rise in the minimum wage. The best approach to opposing this move, which will become thoroughly unpopular and might even prompt a reversal, would be to stress that the people affected are the working poor which, for a party called Labour, is exactly the wrong set to target.

Fourth, Corbyn can take the line that, in all the long-term problems confronting Britain, the Conservative Party is putting itself before the nation. That is most obviously true with respect to Europe but it applies too on airport capacity and energy policy. The most politically resonant case, though, is housing where Corbyn can claim the market is broken with all the authority of the distinguished economists on his advisory panel and plenty more besides. The campaign has the added virtue of speaking for a younger generation that is precisely Corbyn's target political cohort.

Even if the government's travails become serious and even if Corbyn articulates the grievances of the affected with force, this is only the case for being against. It is only one part, the lesser part, of the audition to be Prime Minister. If Labour's new leader, and indeed his party, is seriously interested in that post it will need to do more than oppose. That, though, is another story. Perhaps even another party. **12**

# The degeneration of Europe

Sluggish growth, an ageing population and a refugee crisis—will the union survive?

NIALL FERGUSON

There is a paradox at the heart of the new “*Völkerwanderung*,” the mass movement into Europe of people from all over North Africa, the Middle East and South Asia. From the outside Europe looks alluringly beautiful. But from the inside it is ugly, like one of those grand old Prussian or Polish manor houses that were turned into shabby workers’ sanatoriums under the communists.

The great migration of 2015 makes it clear that the European Union (EU) is an attractive destination for hundreds of thousands, and probably millions of people. It is so attractive that since January this year, 2,600 people have died crossing the Mediterranean trying to enter the EU. Yet, viewed from the inside, Europe looks a mess. The European economy seems much closer to “secular stagnation”—in Larry Summers’s phrase—than the United States economy. European politics is also in disarray. In almost every member state there is at least one populist party, and nearly all of them are deeply hostile to immigration.

No doubt, many forms of euroscepticism are unpleasant. But that is not to say that euroscepticism is all unwarranted.

Institutionally, European integration is an incomplete project, and perhaps one that will never now be completed. There is a confederation, the EU, which has a monetary union at its core, but not all the members of the EU are members of the eurozone, just as not all EU members have signed up for the supposedly borderless Schengen Area. The UK is now preparing to hold a referendum on whether or not to leave the EU altogether. When one of the biggest economies in the EU is at least contemplating exit, it is fair to say that the project of European unity is not merely incomplete but in jeopardy.

The near death of the euro between 2011 and 2013 has revealed something very important: the critics of the original design of the European Economic and Monetary Union (EMU) were right about the fundamental mismatch between countries sharing a single currency yet running separate fiscal policies; taxing, spending and borrowing with only a figleaf of restraint (the 1998 Stability and Growth Pact, largely honoured in the breach). In 2000, Laurence Kotlikoff and I predicted that Europe’s monetary union would degenerate and that this would happen because there was a fundamental incompatibility between creat-

ing a monetary union and leaving the member states to do their own thing in fiscal policy.

We claimed that this would work for about ten years, and then fiscal imbalances would cause the whole thing to come apart. That very nearly happened in 2012, when the enormous disparities in public debt came close to destroying the eurozone. Four governments required bailouts. Cyprus and later Greece were able to stay only by imposing capital controls. Today, the possibility of “Grexit” is still discussed; it remains unclear whether or not a solution to the crisis in Greek public finances can be found that will allow Greece to remain inside the euro.

Of course, the fiscal imbalances we foresaw were merely symptoms of deeper structural problems that monetary union had done nothing to address and in some respects had masked. The reason for the swift fiscal deterioration of the so-called PIGS (Portugal, Ireland, Greece and Spain) was that on the eve of the financial crisis their banks were a disaster waiting to happen: over-exposed to frothy real estate, woefully lacking in the capital necessary to absorb the coming losses. The reason the crisis led to much higher unemployment in peripheral countries was that, without anyone quite noticing, they had been falling behind Germany in terms of unit labour costs. When the going got tough, the least competitive firms were disproportionately in southern Europe. Before monetary union, these differentials would have been dealt with through exchange rate changes, with the PIGS’ currencies plunging relative to the German. Under monetary union that was not possible.

Now we have, as a purported solution to these deep-seated problems, a “fiscal compact” signed by every one except the Czechs and the British in 2012. In essence, this requires all members of the euro area to become more like Germany in economic terms. What does that mean? First, it means that they all have to run more or less balanced budgets, so no more of those enormous deficits that we saw in the period of economic crisis after 2008. Formally, the maximum for a deficit will still be 3 per cent, but the International Monetary Fund (IMF) projects that by 2020 only one country in the EMU—Slovenia—will have a deficit bigger than 1.5 per cent of GDP. Seven member states will actually be running budget surpluses.

This is the first step in the direction of what Angela Merkel has called the “*Bundesrepublik Europa*,” the Federal Republic of Europe: an EU that looks more like the Federal Republic of Germany, at least in the way that it handles its public finances; no big deficits and a more or less permanently balanced budget. But it is not the only way that Europe is becoming more like Germany.

Niall Ferguson is Laurence A Tisch Professor of History at Harvard University and a Senior Fellow of the Hoover Institution, Stanford. His latest book is “*Kissinger: 1923-1968: The Idealist*” (reviewed on p46)







© MARKO DJURICA / REUTERS

Hundreds of migrants are pressed against a barrier, erected by Hungarian police, blocking the main highway between Serbia and Hungary

In the past, member states sometimes ran quite large current account deficits, the gap between the value of their imports of goods and services and the value of their exports. Those days are gone. Partly as a result of doing what is often described disparagingly as “austerity.” Fewer eurozone member states now have current account deficits, for the simple reason that their demand for imports has been squeezed and the competitiveness of their exports has been increased. The IMF projects that by 2020 only three members of the eurozone will have current account deficits, and small ones at that.

Everybody, it seems, is going to have low, maybe even negative inflation if they want to be part of the *Bundesrepublik Europa*. This year, Austria will be the member state with the highest inflation rate and that will be just 1.1 per cent per annum, according to the IMF. Five countries inside the eurozone now actually have negative inflation rates.

These are the economic consequences of solving the problem of fiscal imbalance and leaving individual countries to regain competitiveness by driving down wages and or raising productivity. The big question is whether this solution is going to be conducive to economic growth and the creation of jobs. The answer seems to be that it will, but only if this policy is mitigated by the European Central Bank’s (ECB) belated adoption of quantitative easing (QE).

What exactly does quantitative easing mean? Some naive

critics say that it just means printing money, but that is not quite true, or at least it involves the creation of a special kind of money: not the money you or I are able to carry around in our pockets or keep in bank accounts, but the money that banks can keep in their accounts at the central bank. These reserves are what is created when the ECB undertakes QE, and when it creates this new money, it buys bonds.

What is the effect of QE? It seems to be to drive down already low interest rates, reducing borrowing costs and the returns on safe investments. A side effect is to expand the balance sheet of the central bank, that is, the sum total of bonds and other assets held by the bank. That was no bad thing if only because the balance sheet of the ECB had been shrinking, while the Bank of England’s and the Federal Reserve’s had been growing in the aftermath of the financial crisis. When the ECB adopted quantitative easing it was essentially playing catch up, adopting an unconventional monetary policy that had already been taken on by the other major central banks of the developed world.

Now, one thing is clear: quantitative easing is not about to cause runaway inflation. The real question is whether or not it can suffice to avoid runaway deflation and on that question the jury is still out. Low nominal rates and positive inflation rates mean lower real rates on all that debt Europeans have accumulated. QE also boosts share prices by encouraging investors ►



to hold riskier investments that offer higher returns than low-yielding bonds.

The problem is that it is not yet clear whether quantitative easing combined with fiscal austerity is going to produce much in the way of growth. It is growth that matters for ordinary Europeans, because without that it is highly unlikely that Europe is going to be able to solve its chronic problem of unemployment, and particularly youth unemployment, much less to absorb hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of refugees from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia.

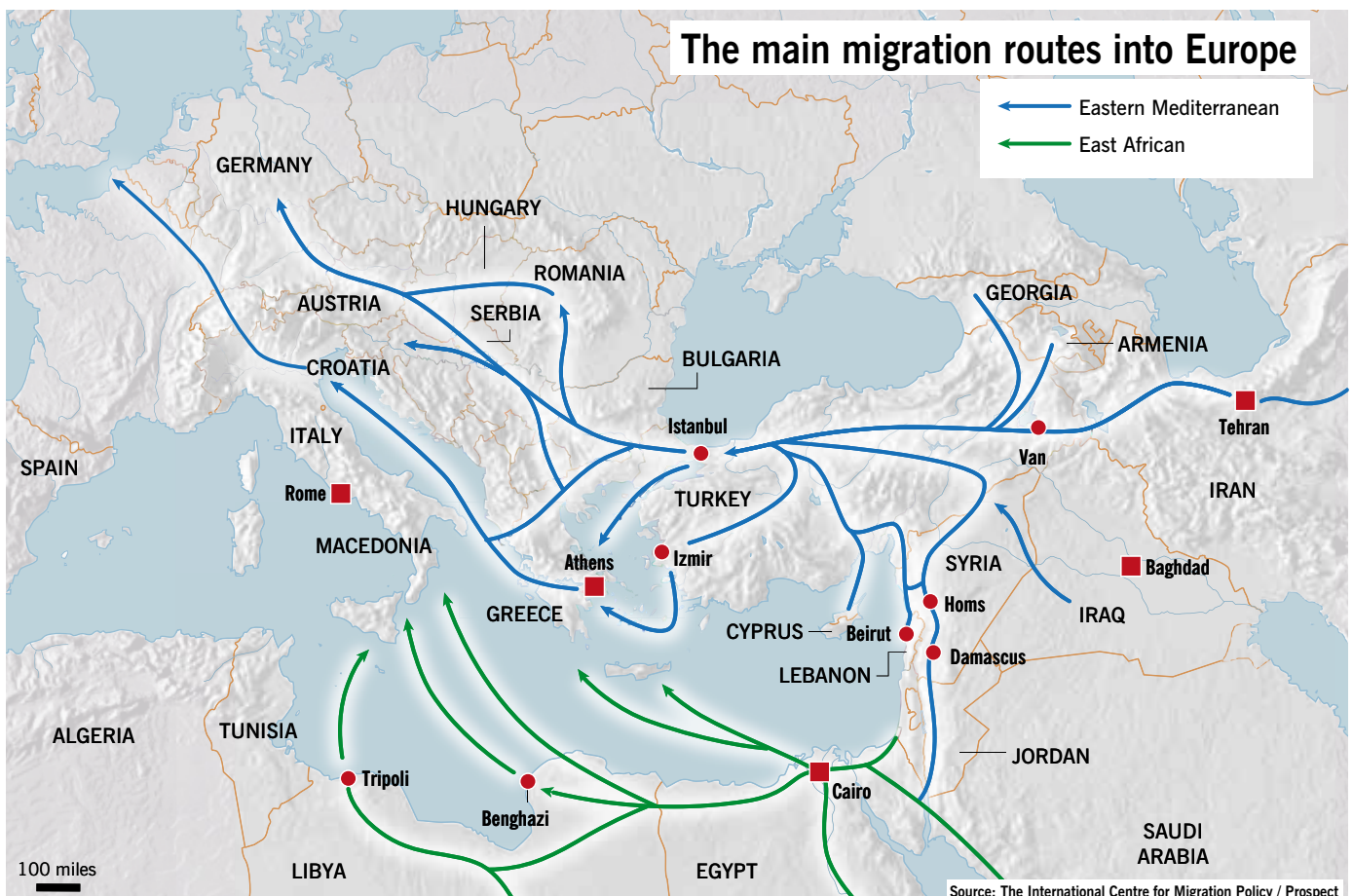
As far as growth is concerned, there is no question that Europe is underperforming. The IMF is currently predicting that the EU as a whole will grow by just 1.8 per cent this year. Even more worrying, it does not expect that rate to go above 2 per cent before 2020. So, for the foreseeable future, Europe is in low growth mode, which means that unemployment rates, which are still extremely high on the periphery of the EU, are likely to stay high. Unemployment currently ranges from below 5 per cent in Germany, the lowest, to 23 per cent in Spain.

The unemployment data require close scrutiny. As is well known, there is a problem of youth unemployment, particularly in the southern European countries. But equally important is the differential in unemployment rates between native-born Europeans and those born abroad. In the US, it should be noted, foreign-born workers are not significantly more likely to be unemployed than native-born ones. That is also more or less true of the UK. But on the European continent foreign-born workers are much more likely to be unemployed than people born in the country in question. Take Germany, where the unemployment rate for foreign-born workers is 74 per cent higher than

for everyone else, according to the Organisation for Economic Cooperation and Development, or Sweden, where immigrants are two and a half times more likely to be unemployed. That is a serious problem. If a society cannot offer employment prospects to immigrants—and if this also applies to the children of immigrants and even their children, as it frequently does—then it is highly likely to fail at one of the most important things a modern society has to be able to do: to assimilate or integrate newcomers.

**W**hat does this mean in the great historical scheme of things? Europe is not quite stagnating, but it is certainly not growing dynamically. It is failing to create jobs, and it is failing especially to create jobs for young people and for immigrants. Seen in a broad historical perspective, this suggests that the great shift from the west to the rest is continuing apace. As I argued in my book *Civilization: the West and the Rest*, this is the biggest economic change the world has seen in 500 years.

If, 500 years ago, you had gone on a world tour, you would not have been especially struck by western Europe compared with some of the other great civilisations you could have visited. It would not have been obvious to a traveller that over the next five centuries there would be a huge divergence in living standards between Europe and the rest of the world. Five hundred years ago, Ming China was in many ways the most sophisticated civilisation in the world. It certainly had some of the biggest cities. Nanjing or Beijing, for example, were far larger than Paris or London. Between the 1600s and the 1970s, a great divergence occurred that saw living standards, on almost any conceivable measure, improve dramatically in western Europe and in ►



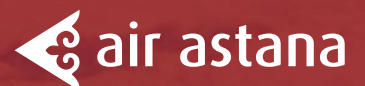


FROM THE HEART OF EURASIA

# VISA FREE KAZAKHSTAN

With visa free\* entrance you can now roam like a nomad across Kazakhstan. Experience Air Astana's award-winning direct services from London Heathrow to Astana and start your global adventure by stopping in Kazakhstan before flying on across Air Astana's extensive Central and South Asian network.

\*visa free entrance to Kazakhstan is valid for British passport holders for a maximum stay of 15 days







© MARTIN WEISSNER / ASSOCIATED PRESS

Angela Merkel, the German Chancellor, listens intently to Jean-Claude Juncker, President of the European Commission, as they arrive for an emergency meeting of EU heads of state in Brussels in September to discuss the migrant crisis

places where western Europeans settled in large numbers, notably North America, relative to living standards in China and the rest of the world. This great divergence is the most striking feature of modern history.

The great empires that emerged from Europe together dominated the world's political landscape (and seascape) as well as its economy. They may have accounted for a minority of the world's population, but those European empires controlled a huge proportion of the rest of the world's people.

In our lifetime, however, the great divergence stopped and went into reverse. Back in the late 1970s, when the People's Republic of China first began to reintroduce market forces into the planned economy, its GDP was a small percentage of the world's total: around 2 per cent. But last year China's GDP (adjusted for differences in domestic purchasing power) exceeded that of the United States at more than 16 per cent of total global output.

What has driven this shift? One answer to that question is a good news story, the other a not-so-good news story. The good news is that China and other countries have adopted the things that after 1500 made Europe so successful. First, was the idea of competition in economic as well as in political life. Second, the

notion of science that underpinned the scientific revolution of the 17th and 18th centuries. Third, was the notion of the rule of law based on private property rights. Fourth, modern medicine, the branch of the scientific revolution that doubled and then more than doubled life expectancy. Fifth, was the consumer society, and sixth, the work ethic.

Part of what we are seeing today is the belated adoption by the rest of the world of ideas and institutions that worked really well for Europe and the west. That is a cause for celebration. It can only be good news that increasing numbers of Asians and now Africans, too, are leaving poverty behind and discovering the benefits of these western institutions and ideas. They still have a long way to go (think about the lack of rule of law in China today, to give just one example), but they have covered an astonishing distance since the 1970s.

The bad news is that even as the rest of the world is getting better institutionally, we in Europe and the west appear to be getting worse. We are suffering from a strange institutional degeneration. This has four aspects.

The first is generational, in the sense that policies in nearly all European states are set to create enormous imbalances ►



# TO THOSE WHO ARE VULNERABLE AND ALONE, I LEAVE COMPASSION, REASSURANCE AND HOPE.

When you write or update your will, please remember the work of the British Red Cross. By leaving just 1% of your estate, you can make sure we're always ready to help people in crisis, whoever and wherever they are, in the UK or abroad.

Find out more about remembering the British Red Cross in your will. **Call 0800 138 4000** or visit **[redcross.org.uk/giftinwill](https://redcross.org.uk/giftinwill)** today for your free information pack.



The British Red Cross Society, incorporated by Royal Charter 1908, is a charity registered in England and Wales (220949), Scotland (SC037738) and Isle of Man (0752).

**Refusing to ignore people in crisis**

between the generations. The way welfare states and pension systems work, in the context of an ageing population, is bound to create burdens for the next generation that they will have to shoulder in order to finance our retirements. The Baby Boomers are leaving the workplace, putting their feet up and looking forward to a long and cushy retirement. But who is going to pay? The answer is: their children, their grandchildren and their great grandchildren.

By the middle of this century the population aged 65 or over in Germany, Italy, Portugal, Spain will be one third of the total. In Hungary, by the end of this century, one in 10 people is projected by the United Nations to be 80 or older. This huge demographic shift, which has its roots in changing patterns of fertility and mortality, is making Europe an old and ageing society. But we are still equipped with welfare states that were designed in the postwar period for more youthful societies, with relatively large proportions of the population in education and employ-

## **“It is an astonishing fact that up to 4,500 Europeans have left the EU to join Islamic State”**

ment. Either we fix these systems, or a shrinking cohort of young people are going to be shouldering a rising burden of taxation to support the entitlements of the elderly. Sadly, those who argue that the problem can be solved by opening Europe's borders to millions of immigrants from the Middle East, North Africa and South Asia are making a grave mistake.

The second way in which we are degenerating as a society is through excessive regulation of the economy. In the EU, bureaucrats like nothing better than to draw up enormously complicated directives and impose them on the rest of us. We all have our favourite examples of absurd regulations devised by Eurocrats to govern the size of bananas or the minimum distance that must separate a wall from a newly planted tree (1.4 metres). But the problem is rather more serious than such silliness suggests. Since the financial crisis of 2008, the idea has taken root that the crash happened because of deregulation. As a result, the bureaucrats reason that we now need regulation, and plenty of it, to prevent another crisis from occurring. The great Viennese satirist, Karl Kraus, once remarked that psychoanalysis was the disease of which it pretended to be the cure. The same may be true of regulation. The more we regulate our financial system, ironically, the more complex and therefore unstable it becomes. The lesson has not yet sunk in that it was the most regulated entities in the financial system—banks—that were at the epicentre of the financial crisis.

Third, the rule of law is something less good when it becomes the rule of lawyers, and regulation, in all its complexity, is a gravy train for lawyers. The one part of every business that is rapidly expanding at the moment in Europe and the US is the compliance department, staffed by people with law degrees.

Fourth, and finally, I think we see a degeneration of the institutions of civil society. By civil society I mean the voluntary non-governmental agencies that used to do so much in western civilisation, and which today have largely been marginalised by the ever-expanding public sector, the all-powerful state.

There are a number of remedies for the institutional degeneration of the west as I have described it. You can, for example,

improve public financial accounting to end the phenomenon of vast off-balance-sheet liabilities. You can introduce “sunset” clauses for laws and regulations so that they expire rather than accumulate. You can reform legal systems, simplifying the laws as well as the regulations. You can encourage a revival of civil society, for example by expanding private education and promoting competition between schools and colleges.

If the US were to undertake these and other basic institutional reforms, I believe they would suffice to boost American economic growth as well as the health of the country's social and political life. Europe, too, would benefit from institutional reforms, not least because they would do a great deal more than a crude fiscal compact to reduce the enormous differentials in the quality of governance that exist between member states. To give a single example: according to the World Economic Forum's 2014 Global Competitiveness survey, Finland leads the world when it comes to the efficiency of its legal system in dealing with cases involving the government. Germany comes 13th. Italy comes 131st.

For Europe, however, there is an additional and daunting problem over and above the low quality of south European institutions. As well as the threats from within that I have described, there is also a threat to Europe from outside.

Radical Islam is the ideological epidemic of our time, just as Bolshevism was an ideological epidemic a century ago. Islamic extremism now represents a global threat to western civilisation. It is capable of threatening lives from Garland, Texas, to Sydney, Australia, but the geographical proximity of the Middle East and North Africa means that it poses a more direct threat to Europe than to other western states.

The threat manifests itself in at least four ways. First, the spread of Islamic extremism within European societies in established immigrant communities like Pakistanis in England, Somalis in the Netherlands, Turks in Germany. A key role has been played here by radical preachers in mosques and Muslim centres funded wholly or partially with money from Gulf states, principally Saudi Arabia. Second, the contamination of non-Muslim communities by extremist proselytising and conversion. Third, the penetration of European countries by new extremists arriving in the guise of asylum seekers, and finally, the two-way traffic between Europe and countries like Syria, Iraq and Pakistan, which enables radicalised young European Muslims to gain experience of conflict and terrorism. It is an astonishing fact that up to 4,500 Europeans have left the EU to join Islamic State in Iraq and in Syria; opting to join a self-styled new caliphate in a misguided and murderous attempt to turn the clock back to the times of the prophet Muhammad's immediate successors.

Europeans were not sorry to see the back of President George W Bush. They repudiated those leaders, such as Tony Blair, who had supported America's post-9/11 “war on terror.” They welcomed Barack Obama's withdrawal of American forces from Iraq and Afghanistan. They shared the naïve view that the “Arab Spring” was a benign phenomenon that would replace dictators with democracies, and they continued to cut their defence budgets so far that Europe has never in its modern history allocated such a small share of national income to the military.

So complete has the abdication of responsibility been that many Europeans find it extremely difficult even to acknowledge the causal connection between the breakdown of states like ►





The British  
Museum

Jews, Christians and  
Muslims transforming  
an ancient land

# Egypt faith after the pharaohs

29 October 2015 –  
7 February 2016

#EgyptExhibition  
[britishmuseum.org/egypt](http://britishmuseum.org/egypt)  
Members free

Generously supported by the

BLAVATNIK  
FAMILY FOUNDATION

Basalt bust  
of Germanicus.  
Probably made  
in Egypt. Roman,  
c. AD 14–20.

Book  
now



Iraq, Libya and Syria and the wave of migration that broke over Europe this year. In the outpouring of empathy awoken by the plight of the refugees, I detected almost no recognition that leaving these countries to descend into civil war and anarchy might have been an even bigger mistake than intervening and attempting to democratise Iraq and Afghanistan.

What will be the consequences if a million or more people arrive in Germany this year? Such figures compare to a total asylum intake of 4.1m in the 61 years between 1953 and 2014. The current inflow already exceeds the exodus of citizens of the former German Democratic Republic to the Federal Republic between 1989 and 1990, as a result of German reunification, which totalled almost 600,000.

The last time people were flowing into western Europe in their millions was in the aftermath of the Second World War. The defeat of Nazi Germany and its allies led to the displacement of an estimated 25m people. By the end of 1945, over six million refugees had been repatriated by the Allied military forces and UN Relief and Rehabilitation Administration. By 1947, however, 850,000 displaced persons remained in camps all over Europe, most of them of east European origin.

## “I do not believe that institutional reforms alone will solve the imbalances that we see today”

To set the current migration to Germany into perspective, it is worth remembering that between six and seven million ethnic Germans were expelled from Eastern Europe and territory annexed from the German Reich between 1944 and 1946. The overwhelming majority of those expelled settled in what became the Federal Republic. However, the expellees—like those who crossed from East to West after the fall of the Berlin Wall—were Germans. Today’s newcomers to Germany are (if the official statistics for August are taken as a sample) predominantly from the following countries: Syria (30 per cent); Albania (25 per cent); Afghanistan (7 per cent); and Iraq (5 per cent). They are overwhelmingly Muslim in religion.

In that sense, the relevant parallel is the “*Gastarbeiter*” programme of the 1960s, which, in over slightly more than a decade (1961–73), saw a total of 2.6m workers arrive in Germany for what was supposed to be temporary employment in its booming industries. Although initially intended to recruit other Europeans, the programme was extended to Turkey. Within a short time, Turks became the most numerous “guest workers” in the country. When the programme was terminated in the economic hard times of 1973, the majority stayed. Today, as a consequence, the number of German residents with origins in Turkey (that is, at least one Turkish parent) is around three million (according to the 2011 census) or approximately 3.7 per cent of Germany’s population.

To say that Germans are ambivalent about their country’s transformation into an “immigration land” with a substantial Muslim minority would be an understatement. Speaking to an audience of young members of the Christian Democratic Union in October 2010, Merkel herself said: “We kidded ourselves a while, we said: ‘They won’t stay, sometime they will

be gone,’ but this isn’t reality... and of course the approach [to build] a multicultural [society] and to live side-by-side and to enjoy each other... has failed, utterly failed.” As recently as 2010, the situation in Muslim “parallel societies” in the country became the subject of heated political discussions following the publication of Thilo Sarrazin’s best-selling book *Germany Abolishes Itself*.

Some recent academic and sub-academic research on the effects of migration underplays the negative effects of large-scale inflows of population and posits modest benefits. There is also a widely believed argument that, because Germany’s population is forecast to shrink as well as to age, the newcomers might actually constitute the answer to the country’s demographic prayers. Yet, as we have already seen, foreign-born unemployment is far higher than native-born unemployment in Germany. And the figures are even worse for countries that have taken relatively large numbers of asylum seekers in the past, notably the Scandinavian countries.

There are, as I have said, things that western states can do to arrest their own institutional degeneration. But I do not believe that institutional reforms alone will suffice to solve the fundamental imbalances that we see today: the imbalance between an ageing Europe and a youthful Muslim world; the imbalance between a post-Christian Europe—secularised and unbelieving—and an increasingly devout Muslim world; the imbalance between a fundamentally safe and just Europe and a dangerous, lawless Muslim world; above all, the imbalance between a Europe that is failing to create sufficient employment even for its own relatively well educated inhabitants and a poorly educated Muslim world, to whom even the benefits paid to asylum claimants represent an improvement in living standards.

Perhaps the solutions to the challenges that we face—from public financial overstretch to the challenges of mass immigration—may come from new technology. Perhaps. But technology alone cannot be relied upon to save us. The early 20th century saw staggering technological advances, much greater than those in our time (compare Twitter with the jet engine). Yet they did not inoculate Europe against fascism and communism. Nor did they prevent the vast displacements of population and redrawing of borders that those ideologies ultimately caused.

My final question is a stark one: is Europe today any better equipped to withstand the new ideological plague of Islamic extremism, and all that follows in its wake, not least the inevitable populist backlash? In the absence of radical institutional reform to reverse the great degeneration, and without a revival of belief in the values of western civilisation itself, I doubt it. From the outside, Europe may continue to look attractive. But on the inside I fear it is only going to get uglier. P



“We don’t offer a pension plan, but you’ll be given free guide to tax loopholes”

# independent thinking from polity

## Shadow Sovereigns How Global Corporations are Seizing Power

Susan George

*"By shining a light on our new silent rulers and telling us how they work, George replenishes the intellectual armory we need to fight back."*

Matt Kennard, author of *Irregular Army* and *The Racket*

£12.99 | 9780745697826 | Sep 2015



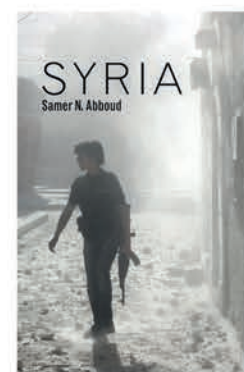
## Syria

Samer Abboud

*"Challenging simplistic views of Syria's revolution and its descent into civil war, this incisive study will be required reading for anyone who wishes to understand Syria's violent trajectory since 2011."*

Steven Heydemann, Smith College

£14.99 | 9780745697987 | Oct 2015



## Surveillance After Snowden

David Lyon

*"Surveillance after Snowden is a brilliant plea for human beings to secure personal agency and civic rights in a world of metadata and surveillance."*

Craig Calhoun, Director, London School of Economics and Political Science

£9.99 | 9780745690858 | Oct 2015



## TTIP

### The Truth about the Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership

Ferdi De Ville & Gabriel Siles-Brügge

*"This essential study should be read by anyone who cares about democracy and the sovereignty of parliaments. If you care, you should understand, and there is no better means of understanding than reading this book."*

George Monbiot

£12.99 | 9781509501021 | Oct 2015



Order your copy now:  
free phone John Wiley & Sons Ltd on 0800 243407

politybooks.com

polity

# No way to plan an airport

The Airports Commission model was flawed and risks steering the Prime Minister towards the wrong answer—and if Heathrow is picked, saddling customers with higher costs

JOHN KAY

**The question of whether to expand Heathrow or Gatwick has been one of the most controversial infrastructure questions this government has faced. The Airports Commission in July strongly backed the choice of Heathrow. But John Kay argues here that the economic model used by the Commission is seriously flawed. There are implications not just for this decision but for confidence in the advice given to government—even more so if George Osborne creates a new National Infrastructure Commission to oversee such questions.**

**D**ear Prime Minister, Within the next few weeks, you will have to make one of the most significant, and controversial, decisions of your premiership: whether to expand London's airport capacity, and if so, whether to choose Heathrow or Gatwick. You will be faced with several thousands of pages of documents prepared by the Airports Commission which you appointed, and an even larger volume of submissions from interested parties.

Howard Davies, chair of the five-person Commission, concluded emphatically in his report published on July 1st that the right solution was to expand Heathrow. He overstates that case. The Commission has given too much weight to a model which includes an excess of detail, and makes too many assumptions about the distant future. It should have focussed on a limited number of central issues: the value of a hub, the costs of the rival options, the nature of airline competition, the value of landing slots and the cost of capital. Above all, the analysis suffers from a mechanical projection of the present into what is in reality a highly uncertain future.

Heathrow Airport is 15 miles west of central London. It has about 650 daily slots (a slot comprises one takeoff and landing), which equates to 470,000 aircraft movements, catering for 74m passengers a year. Forty-seven million passengers start or end their journeys at London and another 13.5m change planes there (and hence count twice). Heathrow became a hub airport when planes struggled to cross the Atlantic and remains a centre for "hub and spoke" operations, not only for British Airways but for the Lufthansa/United Star Alliance and the Delta/Air France/KLM Skyteam. Gatwick Airport, 25 miles south of the city, has

around 350 slots, 262,000 aircraft movements and 39m passengers. Less than 5 per cent of Gatwick users are transfer passengers.

Heathrow has two runways and Gatwick one. (There are four at Frankfurt, JFK and Paris Charles de Gaulle). Heathrow has operated at full capacity for years and Gatwick is approaching it. Demand for air travel is growing, but little faster than GDP.

The Airports Commission reviewed proposals to build a third runway at Heathrow or a second at Gatwick. Your present dilemma arises, Prime Minister, because your predecessors procrastinated 50 years ago on plans to build an entirely new London airport, and at every decision point subsequently. Eventually they authorised what proved a white elephant at Stansted, today mainly used by Ryanair, the ultra-low-cost airline.

The elaborate modelling exercises undertaken for the Airports Commission are based on linear extrapolation of the present for the next 60 years. Everything will be the same, but bigger. Heathrow will continue to cater for financiers on the red-eye from New York, and salesmen departing for Shanghai; Gatwick for families in beach shorts off to Malaga. In future, more suits will want to use Heathrow and more holidaymakers will want to use Gatwick, the model projects. (In fact leisure travel predominates at both airports, but there is considerably more business and long-haul traffic at Heathrow than at Gatwick). If capacity is not increased, airlines will continue to raise prices and make large profits. The profits the model expects them to make from their London flights if there is no expansion are comparable to those the entire world airline industry has made in its history.

In calculating the benefits of the various options, the model looks at the difference between two very large numbers: the loss of these extra profits that the airlines would otherwise earn (producer surplus), and the gains to consumers from lower fares (consumer surplus). Rather oddly, the model appears to treat the loss of profit by foreign airlines that would follow an expansion of capacity as a "cost" in its assessment. That is a display of national altruism these carriers are unlikely to reciprocate.

Finally, the model reckons that because the time of the suits is more valuable than the time of the shorts, and the suits promote economic growth while the shorts spend its proceeds, developing Heathrow creates larger economic spillovers—benefits to people who are not themselves airport users.

*John Kay is a writer and economist. His most recent book, "Other People's Money: The Real Business of Finance," is published by Profile*



**Y**ou can safely disregard most of this convoluted analysis. It purports to describe, in immense detail, the evolution of air transport over the next 60 years, even predicting which routes airlines will choose to fly. But these are things no one can possibly know. Sixty years ago, com-





© STEFAN WERMUTH/REUTERS

A Gulf Air jet arrives over the top of houses to land at Heathrow airport

mercial jet aircraft had just entered service. Low-cost airlines appeared in Europe only 20 years ago and even at the last UK air policy review in 2003 no one imagined that Dubai would now be the world's busiest international airport.

But future change will be far more radical. By 2025, the earliest date at which more runway capacity might be available in the UK, it is probable that there will be commercial drones, driverless cars and fully electric vehicles. Those will transform both the economics of transport and its effects on noise and air quality, and will be precursors to further transport innovations we cannot yet imagine. In the face of such radical uncertainty, the rational course is to focus on known facts, be sceptical of grand projects, and promote developments which leave your successors a wide range of options.

The underlying demand is for air travel to and from London. Most British passengers will go to or from wherever the plane takes off or lands, and airlines will provide services to meet their demand from wherever capacity is available. British Airways has used some of the additional slots it has acquired at Heathrow to start flights to Chengdu and San Jose—and that is the connectivity everyone wants to encourage—but if travellers to these destinations are told their flights leave from Gatwick that is where they will go. If there is no expansion, larger aircraft will fly to fewer, but the most valuable, destinations. Heathrow is much more centrally located than Gatwick but, mainly for that reason, expanding Heathrow is more expensive and arouses much more opposition. Boris Johnson, and the Conservative and Labour candidates to succeed him as London's mayor, have pledged to fight it. These are the main problems with the model.

### London as hub

You made a mistake, Prime Minister, in including an objective of “maintaining the UK as an airport hub” in the Commission's terms of reference. It is not obvious that this should be a goal at all. A businessperson travelling from New York to Moscow provides little benefit to the UK by changing planes in London. In fact the cheapest way of expanding London's airport capacity is to encourage that traveller to transit through Amsterdam instead. Emirates now offers nine flights a day to Dubai from four regional airports, which gives a better experience to people from the North who want to visit friends and family in Australia and makes runway capacity for those planes from London to Chengdu.

It is true that the more air traffic there is to and from London the more flights and destinations there will be from London, but transfer traffic is the least valuable use of scarce airport capacity. Nor do we know the extent to which hub and spoke operation will be replaced by more direct point to point travel stimulated by greater demand and more efficient planes. The claims made for the importance of Heathrow's role as international airline hub are weaker than you have been told.

### The costs

The cost of a runway itself is less than £1bn. Land, stands, gates and terminal facilities make up most of the costs, estimated at £18bn at Heathrow and £8bn for Gatwick. The Heathrow costs are much higher partly because expansion requires that homes be demolished and a waste facility relocated (and cleaned up). The plans suppose that suits need more terminal space per head than shorts. Since the proposed runway crosses the M25 and ▶

demands new access routes, associated roadworks at Heathrow will add an extra £5bn to the total for an all-in cost of £23bn. Gatwick expenditure can be phased because terminal growth there can be piecemeal but the Heathrow plan requires a new terminal immediately the runway opens.

### Current airport charges

On average, airlines pay the airport £23 for each (arriving or departing) Heathrow passenger, while the equivalent figure at Gatwick is £9. Heathrow passengers contribute another £12 per head in car parking charges, profits on retail concessions, and other revenues; those at Gatwick, only £8 or so. Operating costs (excluding depreciation) are £15 per head at Heathrow, £9 at Gatwick. Thus each Heathrow passenger makes a net £20 contribution to capital costs and each Gatwick one around £8.

The intention is that the costs of either expansion (though perhaps not the Heathrow roadworks) will be financed by the airports themselves while (somewhat curiously) the regulatory regime will allow these costs to be recovered in their entirety from all users of whichever airport is selected for expansion. So if Heathrow is selected charges are likely to rise by around 50 per cent; if Gatwick, the increase will be more in relative terms, but less in absolute terms.

### The value of slots

Discussion of the market in Heathrow slots is confined to one footnote. Currently, landing slots at Heathrow are a valuable commodity, while at other London airports (including, until recently, Gatwick) they have been available on demand. Continental (now United) Airlines paid over \$200m in 2008 for four Heathrow landing slots, but these were at prime times of day and the price seems excessive. British Airways bought BMI for £172m, mainly for its 42 landing slots, and slots have changed hands more recently at around £15m–£20m. These figures emphasise the attractiveness of Heathrow but nevertheless make it difficult to see how it could be worth the additional cost of £15bn (£40m per slot) to create the 350 new slots at Heathrow rather than Gatwick.

### Fares and profits at London airports

As was implied by the Airport Commission model, and is evident from the slot valuations above, inadequate capacity at London airports boosts airline profits by restricting capacity and competition. Prices are determined more by the presence or absence of competitive pressure than by differences in underlying costs. The premium for slots at Heathrow seems mainly to be the result of anxiety by airlines to attract transfer passengers rather than a reflection of the greater convenience of Heathrow's location for UK users of these airports.

The “economic rents” which airlines are extracting as a result of past policy failures, which will increase steadily until new runway capacity becomes available, should be used to defray the costs of expansion and not allowed to boost airline and airport profits. This means that your decision on expansion must be linked with carefully crafted policies about how airport charges fund future airport development. It is disappointing that neither the Airport Commission nor the Civil Aviation Authority (the economic regulator) appear to have thought this issue through.

### The cost of capital

The key to an evaluation of any long term infrastructure proposal is the anticipated life of the project and the relevant cost of capital,

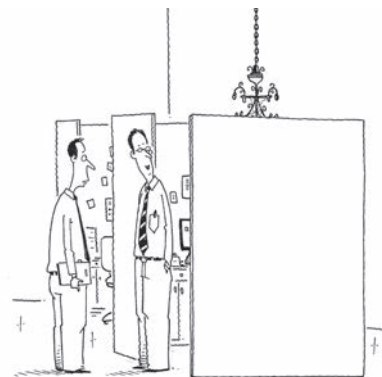
an issue which the Commission has failed to address. London airport expansion is essentially investment in the ability to land planes near the capital, an asset which will be useful as long as air travel of the kind we know continues.

But what figure should be used for the cost of capital? There are several possibilities. First, the risk free rate at which the British government can borrow. The longest dated index-linked gilt, maturing in 2068, currently yields minus 1 per cent. Second, the “green book” rate prescribed by the UK Treasury, used in the Commission's cost-benefit analysis, and fixed arbitrarily in 2003 at 3.5 per cent in real terms. Third, the anticipated cost of the Private Finance Initiative-type deal which it is anticipated will be employed to fund airport developments—around 5 per cent—6 per cent in nominal terms. The final possibility is to use the weighted average cost of airport capital of between 5 per cent and 6 per cent in real terms, as set by the CAA, Britain's airport regulator.

Each of the last three plays a role in the Commission's calculations, but there is no discussion of the appropriate choice or of the compatibility of the different assumptions made. And arguably it is the first—the risk-free long-term borrowing rate—which is most relevant.

Which rate is used makes all the difference. At minus 1 per cent over a life of 60 years, the annual cost of the proposed capital expenditure at Heathrow is around £250m. At 3.5 per cent, the figure is £800m. And at 5.5 per cent the annual cost becomes £1.35bn. If (optimistically) operating costs were maintained at £15 per passenger, a 5.5 per cent cost of capital would make the cost of providing fresh capacity at Heathrow around £55 for each of the extra 35m arriving or departing passengers, a cost which would be spread over all Heathrow passengers and which would make it the most expensive airport in the world by some distance. The equivalent figure for Gatwick is £23—still expensive, but probably worthwhile. British Airways would be the largest contributor to the costs, and would gain business opportunities but lose pricing power in any expansion—wherever it takes place but especially at Heathrow. BA opposes growth at its principal hub.

A revenue stream assured by a government agency and secured on landing charges at a London airport should not expect a return on capital substantially in excess of a risk-free borrowing rate. If the capital costs of Heathrow expansion could be substantially reduced and its actual financing costs were also trimmed, that project would merit further consideration. Otherwise, a second runway at Gatwick appears simpler, cheaper, less risky and less politically unpalatable. ■



*“My hopes for a corner office may have been dashed. But I think the chandelier more than makes up for it”*



# HS2. How will you handle it?



It's party conference season and the debate over the value and purpose of HS2 isn't going away. In fact its becoming more and more of a political hot potato.

The question is who is going to let go first, stand back and look at it objectively?

Who, in this day and age of austerity, the struggling NHS and cutbacks across all public services, could believe that spending what many people predict will be double the £50bn budget on a railway line for rich business people is justifiable? Indeed, given the terrible

journey undertaken by refugees escaping the war in Syria, it is morally incomprehensible.

With cuts to much needed rail improvements on other networks that would benefit the whole of the country, it's hard to defend this expenditure on a line that benefits so few, with a business case that's flimsy to say the least, and would appear to mainly financially bolster London and of course the developers and engineers involved in its construction.

It's time this half-baked scheme was binned before the British taxpayers get badly burned.

HS2  
**ACTION**  
**ALLIANCE**  
[www.hs2actionalliance.org](http://www.hs2actionalliance.org)



© BUFFY PARKER / YALE UNIVERSITY

# Every President's guru

Henry Kissinger became the most reviled and admired statesman of his time. Whatever his secret weapon might have been, it wasn't loyalty

FERDINAND MOUNT

**F**ürth is a small, sooty industrial town in Franconia, next to Nuremberg. Its Jewish population had been as high as 20 per cent in the late 19th century, but by May 1923 when Heinz Alfred Kissinger was born, the Jews of Fürth were a smaller, closeknit community, fiercely patriotic and loyal to the Weimar Republic which was struggling with hyperinflation. The Kissingers were Orthodox and Heinz was a devout boy. A cousin remembers going for a stroll with him outside their “*eruv*,” the

**Kissinger 1923-1968: The Idealist**  
by Niall Ferguson (Allen Lane, £16.99)

real or symbolic boundary encircling the Jewish community beyond which, on the Sabbath, they were not allowed to carry anything in their hands or pockets, and Heinz reminding him of this and the two boys taking their handkerchiefs out of their pockets and tying them to their wrists.

Only a few miles from this peaceful, cloistered world were the searchlights of the monstrous rallies. By 1932, unemployment in Fürth had reached 50 per cent. A year later, Hitler came to power, and the communists in Fürth were all rounded up and taken to Dachau. In 1934, Julius Streicher was made an honorary citizen of Fürth; in his acceptance speech, he promised that “if another war comes, all the Jews in Franconia will be shot, because the Jews were responsible for the last war.” Yet it was not until August 1938, just

*Ferdinand Mount* is a writer and journalist. His most recent book is “*The Tears of the Rajas*”





**Left: (Left to right) Robert Murphy, Richard Nixon, Averell Harriman and Henry Kissinger at the Pierre hotel, New York, 1968**

before the unmistakable crash of Kristallnacht, that the four Kissingers fled to New York. Dozens of their wider family stayed behind to be murdered.

Only six years later, Heinz, now Henry, Kissinger was back on German soil as a sergeant in the US 84th Division, and newly enrolled as an American citizen after enlisting. He briefly endured some of the worst fighting on the Siegfried Line, as did another New Yorker, JD Salinger. But with his native German, Henry was soon plucked out of combat to sift the unregenerate Nazis from those potential collaborators who might help in the rebuilding work.

The opening quarter of Niall Ferguson's huge and irresistible biography tells of a cataclysmic life-change; a second volume will cover Kissinger's career from the Richard Nixon years onwards. Yet Kissinger claims to have been untouched by it all. "My life in Fürth seems to have passed without leaving any deeper impressions," he said when he went back there in 1958. He had been beaten up, but "the political persecutions of my childhood are not what control my life." He wrote in his memoirs, "I have resisted the psychiatric explanations which argue that I developed a passion for order over justice and that I translated it into profound interpretations of the international system."

Kissinger wants us to believe that he was always just as Oriana Fallaci described him in her memorable interview: "God, what an icy man! During the whole interview he never changed that expressionless countenance, that hard or ironic look, and never altered the tone of that sad, monotonous, unchanging voice. The needle on the tape recorder shifts when a word is pronounced in a higher or a lower key. With him it remained still, and more than once I had to check that the machine was working."

It is his marmoreal persona as much as what he actually says that has made him the most reviled and most admired statesman of the second half of the 20th century. Ferguson is inclined to identify Herman Kahn, with a dash of Wernher von Braun, as the original of Stanley Kubrick's Dr Strangelove and of Professor Goebschele in Sidney Lumet's *Fail-Safe*. Yet surely Kissinger was a more startling and unforgettable character than either of the others.

Occasionally, though, we get an inkling that his persona may be a manufactured one. There is the letter he wrote to a girlfriend shortly after arriving in New York, admitting that "since 95 per cent of my previous ideals have suffered shipwreck, I no longer have any clearly delineated goals... I am not so much pursuing a durable ideal as trying to find one." He certainly lost his Jewish faith and adopted a harsh ironic tone, with quite a biting wit. But the strangest thing is that while his younger brother Walter, who was to become a successful tycoon, spoke flawless American, Henry kept and keeps to this day his heavy Bavarian accent. Walter's explanation was "I listened, and Henry didn't." But is it not possible that Dr K is the modern equivalent of the Delphic Oracle, where the priestess was taught to put on a druggy, barely intelligible voice, in order to lend superhuman authority to her obscure pronouncements?

Oracles are always in competition with one another. Harvard, where Henry was to spend the rest of his life when he was not in Washington or New York, was Oracle Central. No fewer than 50 professors from Harvard joined the John F Kennedy administration, among them John Galbraith, McGeorge Bundy and Arthur Schlesinger.

In retrospect, it may seem as if Kissinger effortlessly acquired the role of every President's indispensable guru. But as Ferguson shows, it was a never-ending struggle to establish his credentials with each incoming administration. His opening gambit was always Cassandra's: "We're losing the Cold War and people all over the world are turning to Communism." That was in 1959, in the dying days of Dwight Eisenhower's administration. A few years later, he was just as disillusioned with Kennedy: "I am filled with a sense of imminent national disaster... [I]f present trends continue, I expect not simply a foreign policy setback, but a debacle." Such dark broodings were always welcome to a presidential candidate looking for ammunition.

So too were his repeated criticisms of the confusion, backbiting and incompetence inside the White House, which a new broom, preferably one wielded by himself, would sweep away. In fact, when he did manage to get halfway inside the Kennedy



**Henry Kissinger in US Army uniform on the eve of the battle of Eygelshoven, Netherlands, 1944, just over six years after his family had been driven into exile by the Nazis**

White House, he was caught up in vicious spats with Bundy, who eventually pushed him out again. Kissinger took his humiliation badly. The Kennedy administration had “demoralised the bureaucracy and much of the military,” relied on “public relations gimmicks and a superficial, somewhat managed press,” had “no respect for personal dignity” and had treated people as tools. So much for Camelot, from one who no longer had a seat at the Round Table.

Kissinger came to be distrusted by three successive American Presidents—Kennedy, Lyndon Johnson and Nixon—because his first loyalty remained with Nelson Rockefeller, whom he absurdly overvalued, not least because Rocky kept him on his payroll. He had told so many people how much he loathed Richard Nixon that when he finally accepted Nixon’s surprise invitation to become his Secretary of State, the Rockefeller staffers broke out into a chorus of “I wonder who’s Kissinger now.” Whatever Dr K’s secret weapon might be, loyalty it wasn’t. The fact that he and Nixon were to work together in such remarkable harmony only showed what a match for each other they were. Kissinger commented in a lordly way on the “curious phenomenon of people deciding to run for high office first and then scrambling around for some intellectuals to tell them what their positions ought to be.” But the scrambling of the intellectuals to be asked for their advice was scarcely less curious.

And what precisely did that advice amount to? Ferguson’s pages leave a damning impression; perhaps more damning than he expected to leave. For the first part of his career at least, Kissinger’s vatic pronouncements tended to be based on information that was skimpy and second-hand. Crucially, he had travelled nowhere in the Third World, where the Cold War was so cruelly hot. He swallowed, and then regurgitated, the conventional wisdom about the non-existent “missile gap,” the perceived superiority of the USSR’s missile arsenal over that of the US. Even in terms of the American response, he had no idea how energetic Eisenhower had been in the psychological offensive against Communism and how ruthless that apparently bumbling old golfer was prepared to be in getting rid of opponents.

At a deeper level, it is doubtful whether he had fully grasped the wisdom of George Kennan’s “long telegram” from Moscow and his follow-up 1947 article in *Foreign Affairs* under the pseudonym of X. What Kennan called the “long-term, patient but firm and vigilant containment of Russian expansionist tendencies” was to remain the basis of American foreign policy right up to 1989. Behind it lay the assumption that Moscow was “highly sensitive to logic of force... It can easily withdraw and usually does when

strong resistance is encountered.” If containment was sustained, over the long term, there was every reason for optimism because “Soviet power bears within it the seeds of its own decay.”

Kissinger, by contrast, repeatedly returned to his pessimistic theme, that the west was steadily losing. His analysis was further led astray by his indifference to economics. Only once in the book do we find him referring to any comparative statistics, when he points out that the USSR’s steel production was a fraction of the US’s. But then the whole Russian economy, by any estimate, was only a third the size of America’s. Like so many professional Sovietologists, it never seems to have crossed Kissinger’s mind that the glowing statistics pouring out of the Kremlin might be largely fictitious.

In place of the patient, unshowy containment recommended by Kennan and pursued in practice by Eisenhower, Kissinger repeatedly called for the President to show who was boss, by threatening a preventive war with tactical nuclear weapons. He went so far as to claim that “very powerful nuclear weapons” could be used “in such a manner that they have negligible effects on civilian populations.” He imagined that this kind of war could be fought with “pauses for calculation” between bouts of fighting and even that “battles will approach the stylised contests of the feudal period which were as much a test of will as a trial of strength.” Such wars need not spread into wars of annihilation.

Eisenhower was deeply sceptical that any sort of limited war, conventional or nuclear, could be fought against the Soviets without escalating. What other lessons did history teach? The Great War had begun with cavalry and ended with tanks and aircraft. The Allies had started the Second World War on the understanding that they would not bomb civilian targets. By the end, half of Germany’s cities were flattened and Hiroshima and Nagasaki were dust and ashes. The march of technology and the lust for revenge have always been deadly allies.

**T**he threat of limited nuclear war was, however, Kissinger’s unique selling point, and he found it difficult to resile from it. The belief that followed from this line—that test bans, arms limitation treaties and concessions on Germany were pernicious sell-outs—left him stranded in the Berlin crisis of 1961. He had even less to say about the Cuban Missile Crisis the following year. By then, he was out of the loop, and his theory should have led him to oppose the backdoor deals between the Kennedy brothers and Khrushchev. Buying the withdrawal of the Russian missiles from Cuba by surreptitiously withdrawing the US Jupiters from Turkey was just

## Henry Kissinger in Prospect

[www.prospectmagazine.co.uk](http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk)



- “I’m very concerned about how the Ukrainian situation is evolving because I think it has some of the attributes of the July 1914 situation.” Read the interview with Henry Kissinger by **Bronwen Maddox**
- “The age of great statesmen appears to be over. On the evidence of this book, that may not be a bad thing.” Review of Henry Kissinger’s book *World Order* by **Mark Mazower**
- Read our current coverage of the crises in Ukraine and Syria





Henry Kissinger with Nancy Maginnes in 1973; they married in 1974

© AP / ASSOCIATED PRESS

the sort of slippery trade which he thought undermined the US hegemony.

Kissinger's advice in Vietnam was a rather different story. Henry's physical courage was never to be doubted. Beginning in August 1965, he made three trips to South Vietnam, each time insisting on being taken to the hottest spots and talking to the men in the front line. He quickly concluded that the situation was far worse than the commanders would admit and that many of the supposedly safe areas returned to Vietcong control at night. The best that could be hoped for, he privately told Michael Stewart, the British Foreign Secretary, as early as May 1966, was "a better face-saving device to enable eventual American withdrawal."

Yet in public he continued to maintain what he had said to Bundy before his first trip that "our present actions in Vietnam are essentially right." Unlike Hans Morgenthau, he never came out publicly as an opponent of the war. Morgenthau, whose career as an adviser to Lyndon Johnson ended sharply as a result, despised him for it.

Instead, Kissinger pursued a series of fruitless negotiations through various more or less dodgy intermediaries. Elaborate initiatives bigged up in capital letters—MARIGOLD, SUNFLOWER, PENNSYLVANIA—all led nowhere. The politicians caught on quicker than the advisers that the North Vietnamese were simply stringing them along, being willing to wait another twenty years until the American will finally crumbled. In fact, it took another ten.

At times, in Ferguson's remorseless narrative, I was reminded of Philip Ziegler's tremendous life of Mountbatten, in which the author tells us that, in order not to be hoodwinked by his subject, he has to place on his desk a notice saying: "REMEMBER, IN

SPITE OF EVERYTHING, HE WAS A GREAT MAN."

In this first volume Kissinger seems so often mistaken and, for all his fabled intellect, so slow to catch on to the realities of power that you wonder how he ever got his reputation for realpolitik. In fact, as Ferguson argues, in the first half of his life he would be better described as an idealist. As for his equally fabled cunning, he often seems more like Mr Magoo than Machiavelli. As a kibitzer, though, he never fell below Olympic class.

The one achievement that cannot be disputed is his PhD thesis on the end of the Napoleonic wars, later published as *A World Restored: Castlereagh, Metternich and the Problems of Peace, 1812-22*. This still stands as a classic study in peacemaking, subtle and nuanced in its analysis, charming in its character studies and elegant in its style. Although Kissinger gives a delicious account of Metternich's manoeuvres to disentangle Austria from Napoleon's snares, it is Lord Castlereagh, the British Foreign Secretary, who is the book's real hero. At every turn, Castlereagh is ready to make the necessary concessions to secure a lasting peace, knowing that Britain's greatness lies in her industrial and financial strength and needs no enhancement by braggadocio or more colonial possessions. A great power should be great enough to give a little, and damn the domestic political consequences. Castlereagh took the flak, and it killed him. Happily Dr Kissinger is with us still.

But the lesson that Henry finally learns is Castlereagh's. The Number One power must be prepared to lose a little and endure the occasional humiliation. The consequences are all to come in Ferguson's second volume: the tragically delayed exit from Vietnam, the Strategic Arms Limitations Talks, the Anti-Ballistic Missile Treaty, the Helsinki Final Act, the opening to China and the Camp David Accords. Yes, he was great in the end, but not yet. **P**



©REUTERS / KHALIL ASHAWI

# Putin's goal in Syria

Only Russia has a plan—we should join it or stay out

RACHEL POLONSKY

After Vladimir Putin's meeting with Barack Obama at the United Nations on 28th September, the Russian Foreign Ministry's spokesperson Maria Zakharova was relayed live from New York to the Moscow studio of *Special Correspondent*, a popular talk show on Russia-1, the state-owned television channel. The theme was the end of the unipolar world order—of the west's ability to shape the world as it would like, above all the Middle East. "We would prefer not to have been right," Zakharova said, with the more-in-sorrow-than-anger tone of an exasperated schoolteacher.

If in the Middle East, she continued, we saw a single example of a developing democratic state with flourishing citizens of the kind that the advocates of the unipolar world promised their methods would bring, perhaps we might trust the west's proposals. Instead, we see nothing but poverty, ruin and terrorism, and an evil spreading across continents, threatening Europe and our own country. Quoting the most resonant line in President Putin's speech to the UN General Assembly—"Do you, at least, realise what you've done?"—she lamented that there were still actors on the world stage who seemed not to grasp that it was time to collaborate on a logical strategy to defeat Islamic State (IS).

The United States and Britain are still hesitant about that collaboration. But the unpalatable truth is that the west does not have a coherent plan for Syria. In my view, it is time either to join Russia, which does have a coherent plan, or to stay out.

Zakharova embodies the communications strategy that has

**Rachel Polonsky** is an Affiliated Lecturer at the Department of Slavonic Studies, University of Cambridge





**Left: the aftermath of what activists report was a barrel bomb dropped by President Assad's forces on a town in Idlib province, Syria, in June**

played an integral part in Russian foreign policy during this new phase of the Syrian civil war. Young and articulate, she is fluent in English and Chinese. Her manner is urgent and sincere. Her appointment in August was part of Russia's preparation for war, a response to Jennifer Psaki, the former US State Department spokesperson whose briefings became the target of mockery on Russian state television during the Ukraine crisis in 2014. Dmitry Kiselyov, a pundit dubbed the Kremlin's "propaganda chief," claimed that a new buzzword had appeared on social media: "psaking," a metaphor for "low-quality American diplomacy."

Over the years of Nato expansion and western-backed regime change in the Middle East (and, as most Russians see it, in Ukraine), anti-Americanism in Russian state media has become feverish. Over Syria, in which the west has taken part in a civil war without having decided which side it wants to win, the tone towards America has shifted and become, at times, pitying. Margarita Simonyan, the 35-year-old Editor-in-Chief of the news network RT (formerly Russia Today), summed up the new attitude recently: "The eternal question is: do they have a far-reaching plan, which we don't understand, or are they just making stupid mistakes because they're not properly informed?"

The logistical skill and speed of Russia's intervention in Syria left western leaders humiliated and confused. Over the summer, the State Department and Foreign and Commonwealth Office believed they were collaborating with Russia on a transition plan for the removal of President Bashar al-Assad. If this was a ruse, they should not have been fooled. Perhaps they were just not listening. Regime change in Syria was never on Moscow's agenda.

The overt phase of the Russian intervention was timed to coincide with the UN General Assembly. A first sign of Russian matériel on the move was picked up in late August, when a warship from the Black Sea Fleet sailed through Istanbul with armoured personnel carriers on deck. In early September, pictures were leaked on social media of Russian special forces in Syria. The US asked Bulgaria and Greece to block Russian military flights. By the time the General Assembly's 70th session opened, SU-30 fighter-jets were visible on the runway of al-Assad airport at Latakia.

Putin, meanwhile, was receiving guests. Between late August and late September, the leaders of Egypt, Saudi Arabia, the UAE, Jordan, Qatar, Kuwait, Israel and Turkey went to Moscow. On 21st September, Benjamin Netanyahu, the Israeli Prime Minister, arrived with the Chief of Staff of the Israeli army and his head of military intelligence and left satisfied that Russia would not compromise Israel's strategic interests. As for Assad, "we are neither for nor against," Netanyahu said. A day later Putin welcomed Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan for the opening of a vast new mosque (Moscow is home to at least two million Muslims). Turkey and Russia are at odds over Assad. The news Erdoğan had received about a Russian military build-up was "not pleasant," he said. Turkey has pressed for a no-fly zone in northern Syria. For Moscow, though, no-fly zones portend a repeat of Libya in October 2011, in which Nato airstrikes led to the capture and killing of Muammar Gaddafi in Sirte, a Mediterranean port now held by IS.

On 25th September US Central Command tweeted: "We urge the Russians to be transparent about their activities in Syria."

## *Prospect: the Syria debate*

As David Cameron prepares the way for a vote on bombing in Syria, Britain faces an ugly choice: whether to back Russia in targeting IS, if that also means propping up President Bashar al-Assad—see James Harkin's July 2013 cover story, right; Bronwen Mad-dox's ("Which side is Britain on?" October). That is clearly Russia's goal, and its deployment of aircraft and other forces gives it the upper hand. Rachel Polonsky argues here that this is the best course. Many would disagree, and see backing Russia—and Assad, whose military has killed so many Syrians—as a false answer and the fuel for civil war or for the country splitting. But many will agree, too, that the west has to talk to Russia—and that it has no clear plan of its own.



Two days later, Putin appeared on US network television with the talkshow host Charlie Rose. "Others say that you're trying to save the Assad administration because they've been losing—ah—ground," Rose ventured, "and the war has not been going well for them and you're there to rescue them." "Yes, that's right," Putin replied.

Having ordered the US to leave the airspace over Syria, Russia made its first strikes the day after Putin left New York. Sergei Lavrov, the Russian Foreign Minister, remained in the company of world leaders and the media. For days, he was photographed with John Kerry, the US Secretary of State, coming in and out of meetings, shaking hands. As Zakharova put it on Russia-1: "Our aim is simple, to defeat [IS] together, not unilaterally." As soon as the bombing started, an information war flared up over Russia's targeting of non-IS fighters. Senator John McCain (who, after the fall of Gaddafi in 2011, had tweeted, "Dear Vlad, The #ArabSpring is coming to a neighbourhood near you") was enraged, calling the Russian targeting of US-trained rebels "the ultimate disrespect." Whatever the tactical worth of the targets on the ground, Russia was making a point. The US has been training and arming an assortment of groups to fight both IS and Assad. In a press conference broadcast live on CNN, Lavrov quipped: "If it looks like a terrorist, walks like a terrorist, if it fights like a terrorist, it's a terrorist, right?"

**I**n trying to discern what Putin's government has up its sleeve, western intelligence services would do well to pay closer attention to Russian state television discussion shows, which have become instruments for preparing the public for new policies; in this case, a tough war. They also reveal how attentively Russia observes the west, and how deeply it knows the east.

On 13th September, the anchorman Vladimir Solovyov began his show saying: "Obama has admitted he has no strategy for defeating IS... so why can't the west lay Cold War ghosts to rest and work with Russia for a solution, instead of seeing Russia as a threat and the cause of all the world's ills?" The veteran political showman Vladimir Zhirinovskiy then declared himself an orientalist by birth (he was born in Central Asia, served in the Caucasus and speaks Arabic). He took off on a high-energy flight of conspiracy theory: Americans are gangsters, IS was created to destroy Russia by lowering the oil price and so on. Andrei Kokoshin, Dean of the Faculty of World Politics at Moscow State University, urged dialogue, explaining that US policy had reached ►



©ANDREY SMIRNOV/GETTY IMAGES

**A pro-Assad Russian demonstrating in Moscow: “Russia’s engagement with IS summons traumatic memories of former wars”**

a dead end because it was guided by “a sacred faith in democracy, and the illusion that all democracies will naturally be US allies.”

Solovyov followed up with a radio talk show devoted to the proposition that “Syria is our border, which we must not surrender.” He asked: “Barack Husseinovich Obama is always trying to convince us that if we give up Assad, everything will be ok—let’s say, there’s no Assad, what happens then?”

“Chaos,” replied his guest, Semyon Bagdasarov, a member of the Russian Parliament, and an Uzbek-born Armenian. Bagdasarov argued that in the urban centres still under Assad’s control—Damascus, Latakia and Tartus—with Alawite majorities and many Christians, there would be a massacre. “Genocide?” Solovyov asked. “Yes, genocide,” Bagdasarov replied.

They also criticised Turkey for using its bombing of IS as a cover for its war against the Kurds, who have become allies of Russia. Kobani, a city in northern Syria, was besieged by IS a year ago, and liberated by fighters of the Kurdish YPG with aerial support from the US. The YPG, now allied with Assad’s forces, have continued to defend the city in the face of IS massacres, in which the Kurds and Syria accuse Turkey of colluding. They feel betrayed by the US.

More unexpected allies have appeared in Russian state media broadcasts. One television programme visited northern Afghanistan, near the Tajik border (which is guarded by Russian troops), where Nato and US special forces have joined the fight over the city of Kunduz, while IS runs a recruitment drive among the Taliban. For Russia, the impending US withdrawal

from Afghanistan represents a grave threat. Abdul Rashid Dostum, the Afghan Vice-President, flanked by dwarf bodyguards, received the Russian reporters with ceremony. An ethnic Uzbek, Dostum was a general in the Afghan army during the Soviet occupation of the 1980s, battling US-backed mujahideen from whose ranks Osama bin Laden later emerged. His men speak Russian. In September, Dostum, who has been fighting IS in northern and eastern Afghanistan, appealed to Russia to provide Afghan security forces with military hardware, including aircraft. “The Daesh [IS] plan is the Caucasus Mountains, Russia and Central Asia,” he said. “You are watching Syria and Iraq being destroyed, and they want to destabilise Central Asia.”

One talk show featured a *Daily Mirror* spread from August, a map of the world as IS would like to see it in 2020. Swathes of Russia appeared in black, renamed “Qoqzaz” and “Khurasan.” Repeatedly, the subject returned to the west’s simulation of a fight against IS and its refusal to become Russia’s ally in a common cause.

Russia’s engagement with IS summons traumatic memories of former wars: the 10-year Afghan war, which precipitated the fall of the USSR’s empire, and the Chechen wars of the 1990s, in which Russian conscripts were beheaded. The intervention in Syria is yet another Chechen war for Russia, but on a vastly expanded front. There are thousands of Russian-speakers in IS, including its toughest commanders, like the red-bearded Tarkhan Batirashvili, also known as Abu Omar al-Shishani. Having excelled in a US train-



ing programme for Georgian special forces, he fought in the Russia-Georgia war in South Ossetia in 2008, before leaving for Istanbul in 2010. He has recruited fighters for IS from Chechnya, Dagestan, Uzbekistan, Tajikistan and Afghanistan. A year ago, IS sent a video message to Putin on the internet, announcing its plan to invade the Caucasus and southern Russia.

Judging by the discussions on television and radio, Russia plans to help the Syrian Army retake the city of Palmyra, from where a strategic highway leads north to the IS capital, Raqqa. IS took Palmyra in May. The jihadists made children execute captured Syrian soldiers in the ancient ruins. In August, they beheaded Palmyra's retired museum director, 82-year-old archaeologist Khaled al-Asaad, and hung his body on a post. Then they blew up the Temple of Bel. One of the city's treasures, the Palmyra Tariff, a five-metre-wide marble slab inscribed in Greek and Aramaic, is preserved in the Hermitage in St Petersburg, a city that has been known since the 18th century as the "Palmyra of the North." The director of the Hermitage, Mikhail Piotrovsky, wrote an obituary of his murdered colleague and spoke on television about the destruction of Palmyra. "When they destroy Palmyra," he said, "the columns of Petersburg shake; when Christianity is destroyed in the Middle East, where it began, it harms Christianity here." Palmyra could have been saved, Piotrovsky said: "The Islamists took a long time getting there... They crossed the desert and no one bombed them, because it would have been considered assistance to the Syrian government, to President Assad."

"Russia's claim that its forces are only there to target Islamic State should be taken with a large grain of salt," Charles Lister wrote on the website of the BBC in late September. Lister is a fellow at the Brookings Doha Center, which is funded by Qatar. "Moscow is well known for viewing Syria's entire armed opposition as uniformly Islamist and a danger to international security... Such sweeping assessments are patently false." This is an odd statement, given that Lister made a similar assessment himself in March: "While rarely acknowledged explicitly in public, the vast majority of the Syrian insurgency has coordinated closely with al-Qaeda since mid-2012." It is time the UK government acknowledged explicitly in public what it knows about the Islamists we have armed and trained to fight Assad and, for that matter, about how much IS funding comes from Qatar.

Russia does not claim that it is in Syria only to target IS. As Putin told Charlie Rose more than once during their interview, Russia is supporting the Syrian government in its fight against all who threaten the survival of the Syrian state. Russia also intends to destroy IS, which is at least as grave a threat to Russian national security as it is to the security of Europe.

David Cameron argues that Assad must be overthrown because he is an Alawite Shia ruling over a Sunni majority, and a recruiting sergeant for Sunni terror groups because of the number of Syrians his military has killed. The argument is also made by Sunni Arab states such as Qatar and Saudi Arabia which have a stake in his fall. In fact, notwithstanding support from Iran and Russia, the Assad regime would not have survived years of civil war without the active support of a large section of the Syrian population, including many genuinely moderate Sunnis and Ismailis, who would rather live in a secular state than under the jihadists who will seize power if Syria falls apart.

Though Assad, whose wife is a Sunni, has bombed enemy territory brutally in his fight for survival, until now many more Syrians have fled to the relative safety of regime-held areas than

have fled beyond the border. Many former opponents of Assad have become regime supporters, particularly in Aleppo and Damascus. The Ismaili town of Salamieh in Hama, once a place of peaceful anti-Assad protest, is now a bastion of support for the regime, and has come under heavy indiscriminate shelling from western-backed rebels.

Millions more Syrian refugees will flee to Europe if Assad falls. No one can expect a happy ending for this vicious crisis—but there is a way of slowing down the slaughter and the frenzy of Islamist expansion from its Syrian base. The only hope of a way out of this conflict is a negotiated political settlement with the Assad regime. According to Martti Ahtisaari, the former Finnish President, Vitaly Churkin, Russia's ambassador to the UN, proposed a plan to the US, Britain and France in 2012, which included an "elegant way for Assad to step aside." The three powers were so convinced that Assad was about to fall that they walked away. "It was an opportunity lost," Ahtisaari says. Since then the death toll has risen from 7,500 to almost a quarter of a million.

If we cannot support Russia in its mission now, or even define our own, we should stand aside. No good has come from our policy of regime change. The UK government's position on Syria is neither logical nor honest.

The most interesting passage in Putin's UN speech was his reflection on his own country's mistakes: "We remember... when the Soviet Union exported social experiments, pushing for changes in other countries for ideological reasons, and this often led to tragic consequences and caused degradation instead of progress." In his speech, Obama declared that for nations, "the measure of strength is no longer defined by the control of territory," but rather by "the success of their people—their knowledge..."

One thing that both IS and Russia understand is that control of territory is everything. Palmyra is territory, and territory has meaning, which it takes knowledge—of geography, history, languages, religions, cultures and the nature of one's enemies—to understand. John McCain calls Russia a "gas station masquerading as a country." He should read *War and Peace*. ■





© WARSAME, OMAR B / ICRC

# Myths about Africa

Think again—the continent is getting more prosperous and democratic by the day

ALEX PERRY

**B**etween October 2010 and April 2012, a quarter of a million people died in a famine in Somalia. Even in the war years, no one had seen dying like it. In a few weeks in mid-2011, half a million people abandoned their homes in the south of the country and walked across the desert to Mogadishu, an exodus of hundreds of miles marked for eternity by thousands of shallow graves. In the

camps the survivors erected out of brushwood and plastic bags in the war ruins of Mogadishu, hundreds were dying every day. When cholera and measles swept the camps, that number accelerated into the thousands. The living and the dead soon found themselves competing for space. Mothers would return to the graves of children they had buried the day before to find a camp had materialised on the same spot over night. By the end of the catastrophe, one in 10 of the children in southern Somalia aged five and under was dead.

Maybe you remember it? Perhaps you gave money to the aid agencies who blanketed newspaper front pages and billboards in London with pictures of starving Somalis? The campaign was one of the biggest of the last decade, raising £1.2bn in months,

*Alex Perry is an author, foreign correspondent and contributing editor at Newsweek's international edition. His latest book is "The Rift: A New Africa Breaks Free"*







Left: Aid is distributed in Somalia's capital, Mogadishu. Above: Supporters of Nigeria's President Buhari celebrate his general election victory in March

about £400 for each of the three million Somalis in need. That figure, however, poses a question. With all that money, how did 258,000 people still die? The answers are an excruciating testament to how badly we in the west can get Africa wrong.

**T**he truth about famine in Africa is that it hardly ever occurs. The Somali famine is the only one to have taken place in Africa in the 21st century, and it had its own special causes.

As was evident to anyone in Mogadishu at the time, even at the height of the famine in August 2011, very little aid was getting to the epicentre in southern Somalia. Almost none of the big western aid agencies raising money to fight the famine were even present, confining themselves to a secure compound at the airport if they were in southern Somalia at all. Why?

Aid workers talked about lack of funds, rich world heartlessness and their own frustrating safety protocols. To journalists familiar with disasters and emergency aid, that sounded all too plausible. It's probably also fair to say that most of these aid workers, who tend to be well-intentioned and well-motivated

people, weren't lying so much as guessing.

Beyond the razor wire of the aid compound and out in the city, Somalia's Prime Minister, its Defence Minister, its Minister for Presidential Affairs, one of its military advisors and a manager for a Somali aid group all knew why aid wasn't getting through, and all spoke openly about it. They said that the Somali and United States governments were forcing aid agencies to withhold food from southern Somalia in order to put pressure on al-Shabaab, a small Islamist group allied with al-Qaeda. Agency managers had been persuaded to go along with this strategy because, according to the Americans, al-Shabaab sometimes stole aid. A case could be made that food aid was a form of support to a proscribed terrorist group, an offence which carried severe penalties under US law. When the aid managers objected, the US reminded them that it was their biggest donor. Reluctantly, the managers capitulated.

As a journalist, I was most outraged by the fact that so few people were aware of what was happening, or, as I later thought was more accurate, that so few were even able to imagine it. The Somali famine was testament to the robustness of our misunderstandings: the way we could look at Africa and still fail to see it. In contrast to their campaigns asking for money to assist the dying, the aid agencies could not help because they were not there, an absence that had helped to create the famine in the first place. But this was a reality so at odds with western precon-

ceptions of Africa that it eluded almost every foreign observer. That's not to say that I alone possessed the independence of mind to search out the truth. My fellow East Africa reporters were among the best in the business and I only stumbled across what was really happening by accident when the Somali aid group manager, exasperated by my own blithe assumptions of western compassion, took me aside and, over several hours of interview, set me straight.

Years later, it turned out he was not the only aid worker who knew the real story. In 2013, Philippe Lazzarini, the UN humanitarian coordi-

nator, began to change the official account of what had happened in Somalia when he said: "We should have done more. These deaths could and should have been prevented. People paid with their lives." Oxfam's Somalia chief went further, writing in the *New York Times* that the deaths of 260,000 Somalis "should ▶

#### FIVE MYTHS ABOUT AFRICA

- It is famine-prone
- It is full of bloodthirsty dictators
- It is poor
- Aid always helps
- China is taking over



weigh heavily on the conscience of Americans” since “US government counter-terrorism sanctions effectively prevented many humanitarian agencies from providing aid in the hardest-hit areas.” Those sanctions were the story, not some myth about Africans’ tendency to starve.

**A**frica is a continent on a spectacular scale. At 11.6m square miles, it is four times the size of Australia, three times that of Europe and more than twice the size of Latin America or India and China put together. A single African jungle, in the Congo, covers twice the area of western Europe and a single African desert, the Sahara, is the size of the US. Between the Sahara and the Cape of Good Hope there are 49 countries, a quarter of all the states on the planet.

In a crowded world, Africa’s wide-open spaces are the secret of its beauty. Imagine an African scene and you’ll almost certainly conjure up a landscape or animals, not a city or people. Size also explains Africa’s great attraction to foreigners. Outsiders have long been drawn to all that land, gold, rubber, slaves, diamonds and elephants. (This is partly what economists mean when they say that Africa is “cursed” by abundant resources). But Africa’s grand dimensions have also proved to be its best defence against acquisitive foreigners. Europeans and Americans spent much of the 19th century taming their own nations under great lattices of steel and copper, but the scale of Africa mostly defeated similar ambitions there. Even the insatiable Cecil Rhodes, the founder of Rhodesia, who dreamed of laying a railroad from Cape Town to Cairo, achieved only a fifth of that distance by his death in 1902, barely reaching Victoria Falls in 1904.

But if boundless space was key to Africa’s splendour and the guardian of its freedom, it also accounted for its lack of development, at least as westerners understood it. The rest of the world was originally colonised by African hunter-gatherers migrating out of the continent in search of fresh beasts. Around 9000 BC, as populations grew and humankind found it was hunting animals to extinction, people stopped moving and, by domesticating animals and sowing crops, invented farming. Farming produced 10 times more food from the same amount of land and in time these early settlements became towns and then cities.

This happened everywhere except Africa. The continent was just too big and its population too small for human beings to run out of space or animals. Two thousand years ago there may have been 40–50m Africans. Two hundred years ago, that number had barely changed. Why? Diseases like malaria and yellow fever, the vulnerability of farm animals to flies and disease, the resilience of man-eating predators and colonialism, which introduced Africans to more diseases and an industrial scale slavery that transported 25m Africans off the continent, are part of the reason. As a result, those great motors of progress—cities, communications and private property—emerged far later in Africa than in the rest of the world. Africans lived apart, enjoying an almost limitless freedom to roam and hunt. They never changed because they never had to. In time, to exist as a human being in Africa and in Europe or Asia came to denote two markedly different experiences.

When Europeans began arriving in Africa in the 15th century, they thought that they had discovered primitive man. But a survey of Africa’s ancient kingdoms suggests that it wasn’t that Europeans didn’t find civilisation in Africa, but that they hadn’t recognised it when they did. In the second millennium, there were around 200 African kingdoms and empires. Some were extremely durable, such as the Wolof Empire, which ruled Sene-



© BLOOMBERG

**Workers at a Chinese-run oil plant in Sudan: China is only the sixth biggest foreign investor in Africa**

gal and Gambia for six centuries, or the Kingdom of Kongo, which existed in Angola and southern Congo for five. Others seem to have been impressive explorers. Fourteenth-century coins minted in the Kilwa Sultanate on Africa’s east coast have been found on an Australian beach, while the discovery of traces of tobacco and cocaine, both of which originated in the Americas, in Egyptian mummies suggests some form of trans-Atlantic trade existed 3,000 years ago. Meanwhile the paved roads, national police





The skyline of Johannesburg reflects South Africa's development

Europeans tend to see African dictatorships as a hollowing-out of democracy. But in an African context, dictatorship is perhaps better understood as a perversion of *ubuntu*, what happens when a leader crosses the line between creating consensus and enforcing it through absolutism. Take another perennial concern of Europeans in Africa: corruption. To any right-thinking European, corruption is abhorrent. Viewed through the lens of *ubuntu*, the corruption and nepotism of a government minister can seem like a social obligation, the conscientious *ubuntu* African sharing his good fortune with his clan.

From the start, then, Africans and Europeans could look at the same object and see two different things. Today, as Africa changes rapidly, that has never been more true. When many outsiders think of Africa they still think of a starving baby. The truth is that the average African is a decently-clothed, increasingly prosperous adult. Last year, the average annual income for an African was \$1,720, about \$200 a year more than the average Indian's, and for those still hanging on to the idea that Africa is primarily a destination for aid, the figures have long shown it to be more of a business destination. Foreign investment first over-

## “Aid agencies often seem intent on ensuring that Africa's story remains one of outsiders saving the children”

forces and standing army of 200,000 of the Ashanti empire in Ghana—which saw off four British attempts at colonisation in the 19th century—bears comparison with Imperial Rome.

There *were* fundamental differences, though. Europe was a crowded place of small countries with finite borders and populations. In Africa, kingdoms and empires rarely met and their edges were not so much borders as markers of a gradual fading of influence. Private land ownership wasn't necessary, and so didn't exist. Citizenship was not a contract between the state and a set number of individuals, but a question of numerous overlapping loyalties to family, to village, and then to clan, region and empire, with culture, religion and language all commanding additional allegiances. For an African king, not knowing how many citizens there were made a political system based on individual rights unworkable. Far more practical was a system of collective rights, administered by the centre for the benefit of the whole, which remained a constant even if the numbers inside it varied.

This set of communal values is commonly known today by its southern African name, “*ubuntu*.” If European individualism was summed up in the 17th century by René Descartes's “*Cogito ergo sum*,” “I think, therefore I am,” Africa's communalist counter was, “I am because you are.” It is the idea that the individual is defined by membership of a community. *Ubuntu*'s stability can look attractive when compared with Europe's turbulent history, but it has its faults, too. Africa's long record of all-out tribal war shows what happens when one unified community meets another it doesn't like. Equally, it is easy for *ubuntu*'s indifference to individual freedom to slide from benevolent dictatorship into tyranny.

took foreign aid to Africa a decade ago and last year hit \$87.1bn, as opposed to \$55.8bn in aid.

For more than a decade now, economic growth in Africa has been among the fastest on earth. That trajectory is widely expected to continue. Over the next decade and a half, hundreds of millions of Africans will pull themselves out of poverty, according to predictions from the World Bank and others, translating to a fall in the proportion of Africans defined as absolutely poor from more than half in 1990 to a quarter by 2030. By 2050, a typical African country like Zambia can reasonably expect to enjoy the same incomes as Poland does today, or possibly even South Korea.

**T**his good news is studiously ignored by western aid agencies. While Africa's economies have been taking off, aid agencies have managed to quadruple aid to Africa since the beginning of the 21st century by convincing the world that conditions there have never been worse. They have been able to do this because of their size and power. Aid today is a global industry that employs 600,000 people and turns over \$134.8bn a year. That's not charity any more but big business; the biggest, in fact, in Africa, where that turnover is equal to the annual GDP of Africa's 20 poorest countries.

The business of aid is crisis. Using its mammoth resources and the unmatched institutional strength that comes from combining the UN, the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, parts of the Pentagon, hundreds of foreign aid departments, thousands of foreign embassies and tens of thousands of foreign aid agencies, the aid industry has been able to define the story of ►

Africa to the outside world according to its own priorities. At their conferences and workshops in Geneva and New York, aid workers note the new hope in Africa, measure it against their press releases about African need and conclude that reports about Africa's rise are unhelpful. Aid workers used to say that their ultimate goal was to put themselves out of business. Today, the aid industry seems to have mislaid its earlier humility. Aid agencies often seem intent on ensuring that Africa's story remains one of outsiders saving the children. Witness the lobbying by aid agencies of this year's UN General Assembly, whose leaders are being asked to commit to ending poverty within 15 years. Every aid agency sees this brave mission as something to be achieved through aid. Not one mentions what the end of poverty actually implies: the end of aid.

You can see the same self-centred dynamic at work in accusations from western businesses and governments that China is acting like a modern-day imperialist in Africa. The idea that China is storming Africa is simply wrong. The biggest investor in Africa by holdings remains France, followed by the US, Britain, Malaysia, South Africa and then China. The notion that anybody could take over Africa betrays an enduring neo-colonial mindset. Africa has commodities that everybody wants, yes. These days, in a growing and ever more confident Africa, that draws suitors, not conquerors.

The same self-regard can be seen in western portrayals of African leaders as baby-eating dictators. Africa still has its dinosaurs, notably Robert Mugabe in Zimbabwe and some of the steadily more authoritarian leadership of the African National Congress in South Africa. Across the continent, however, autocracy is down and democracy is up. As a region, the 49 countries of sub-Saharan Africa are now judged by the Freedom Index, produced by US organisation Freedom House, as more free than the Middle East, North Africa and Eurasia. Take Nigeria. For decades Nigeria was a prime example of a country cursed by resources. Cash from foreign oil companies propped up dictators and transformed politics into an endless, vicious power struggle. But this year, Nigeria held a democratic election in which the incumbent peacefully accepted defeat and was replaced by a rival promising reform. No one could reasonably argue that Nigerian politics are healthy, but since the end of military dictatorship in 1999, they have improved.

Or consider the case of Paul Kagame, President of Rwanda. Kenneth Roth, head of Human Rights Watch, regularly accuses Kagame of being a "tyrant," a description which his organisation's relentless campaigning has ensured is now accepted throughout the west. In response, Kagame has compared today's western human rights campaigners to the European colonisers

of previous centuries who told Africans what to do and how to behave because they knew better. And Kagame is surely correct that an accurate account of Rwanda since the 1994 genocide would focus not only on its human rights record, but also on its stunning transformation from an apocalyptic ruin into one of the world's fastest-growing economies.

**T**hat outsiders misperceived Africa was apparent when I first arrived on the continent in 2006. From afar, Africa had seemed to be about war, dictators, corruption and, yes, famine. On arrival, I found I was covering not implosion but economic explosion; not just hunger in Ethiopia but also yuppie food traders making their fortunes on Africa's first commodity exchange; not savannahs and sunsets but Silicon Savannah, Nairobi's exploding tech scene. The consensus among foreign correspondents was that Africa, like Asia before it, was increasingly a business story.

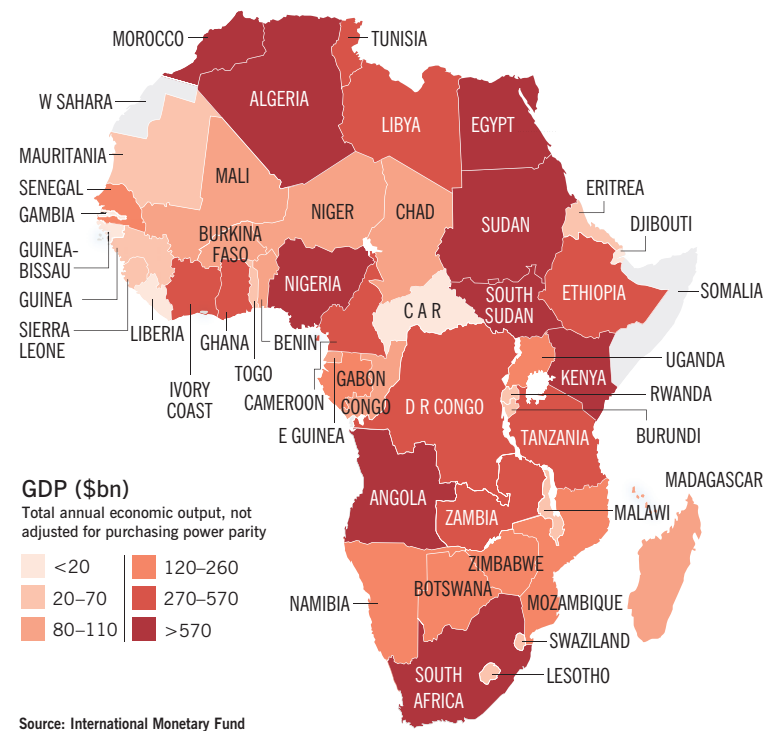
Yet our stories seemed to do little to change the outside world's

ideas of Africa. For a journalist, this was disconcerting. Merely gathering the facts, it seemed, was never going to be enough in Africa. The continent, with its thousands of mountains and rivers, its great forests and deserts, its great wide plains and its billion people, had become an abstraction.

But if perceptions matter as much as facts, try this alternative perception of Africa on for size. It is developing fast. Development is not an even process, but one that always produces inequality on a scale that, if mishandled, can lead to resentment and conflict. Those who mistake the turbulence of the new Africa for the old story of endless war, however, should prepare themselves to be set straight, just as I was a few years ago in Somalia.

For as profound as Africa's economic transformation is, the political implications of that growth are even more far-reaching. Money gives Africans the authority and the means to respond to anyone pushing them around, whether that's the last of their autocrats, a new generation of jihadis, aid workers or anyone presuming to tell Africa's story on its behalf. Half a century after Africans won their formal liberation, they are finally winning the substance of it. As Africa thrives, some old notions will die: that progress is something bestowed by the rich on the poor through assistance; that the west knows best. The developed world, of course, finds it hard to accept the way a fast-changing Africa upsets its ideas both of the continent and of itself. But in the end, the new continental narrative will prove irresistible. It is the story of how a billion Africans will finally win their freedom. **P**

### Africa: the pace of growth





# SEE INVESTMENT IN A NEW LIGHT

FOR PEOPLE.

FOR PLANET.

FOR PROFIT.

Every wise investor looks for a proven track record to spread their risks and get a return. But if you also want to feel good about where your money goes, think Oikocredit.

Since 1975, we've used over €2bn of our investors' capital to invest in people who have no other means of obtaining finance to build their own businesses and find their own path out of poverty.

We do this by placing our investors' capital with more than 800 social enterprise partners in over 60 countries. In 2014, our partners reached 37 million people with this vital financing and technical support, and have enabled Oikocredit to deliver a 2% gross return to our investors each year, every year, since 2000\*. There is no fixed notice period; we charge no annual management or other fees; and we've always repaid our investors' capital in full.

600 million people in India have no access to lighting. But by investing in Thrive Solar Energy Pvt Ltd, Oikocredit is helping weavers, bakers, dairy farmers and school children use low-cost, solar-powered lamps to gain extra hours of light, to build a brighter future.

©Opmeer Reports

Download our prospectus  
to find out more

[oikocredit.org/uk/investmentproduct](http://oikocredit.org/uk/investmentproduct)

Minimum investment £150. No maximum. Conditions apply. Your investment is at risk. It is not covered by a Financial Compensation Scheme and is potentially illiquid. If you are in doubt about the suitability of this investment contact a financial expert. \*Taken from Oikocredit Annual Reports, but past performance is not a guide to future performance and repayment of your investment is not guaranteed.

This advertisement was produced by the Oikocredit International Share Foundation (OISF) and has been approved by Wrigleys Solicitors LLP who are authorised and regulated by the FCA (Financial Conduct Authority). The OISF prospectus is approved by the AFM (Autoriteit Financiële Markten), the regulatory authority for financial services in the Netherlands. The AFM has notified the FCA of the prospectus.



“We went to the cemetery and the first grave was one of our soldiers. It broke me up.”

Ernie Prior  
Resident of The Royal Star & Garter Homes

Monte Cassino was one of the Second World War's toughest and bloodiest battles in Western Europe. When ex-trooper Ernie Prior returned there to visit the Allied cemetery, the first grave he came across was a soldier from his regiment. The memories are still vivid in his mind all these years later.

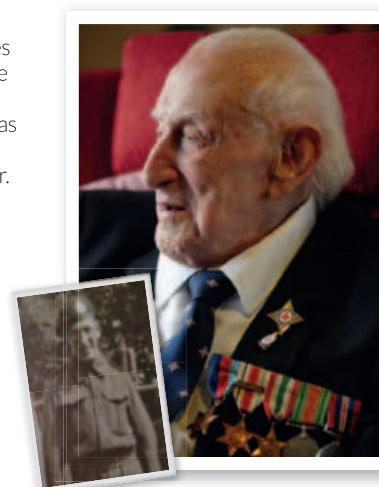
Today, Ernie needs specialist nursing and therapeutic care so that he can remain independent and enjoy life. However, as a charity The Royal Star & Garter Homes can only continue to care for Ernie with your help.

At this time of Remembrance show your support for Ernie and others like him by making a donation to The Royal Star & Garter Homes.

Call 020 8481 7676 (Quoting RM15)

Text support to 70004 to donate £3

Visit [www.starandgarter.org/ernie](http://www.starandgarter.org/ernie)



give with confidence

Registered Charity No. 210119  
The Royal Star & Garter Homes  
15 Castle Mews, Hampton, Middlesex, TW12 2NP

Texts cost £3 plus network charge. The Royal Star & Garter Homes receives 100% of your donation. Obtain bill payer's permission. Customer care 020 8481 7676. Charity No 210119.



The Royal Star  
& Garter Homes  
Caring for the nation's military family since 1916

# The price of progress

How can we put a value on the natural environment?

FRANCES CAIRNCROSS

It was, as it happens, an economist who first suggested 40 years ago that more than 2°C of warming would “take the climate outside of the range of observations which have been made over the last several hundred thousand years.” William Nordhaus of Yale University compared humanity’s approach to climate change to spinning a roulette wheel: “Every year that we inject more CO<sub>2</sub> into the atmosphere we spin the planetary roulette wheel... and the more we continue increasing the emissions that warm the planet the more the odds are stacked against a favourable outcome.”

The roulette wheel has continued to spin. Last year the World Bank argued that “present emission trends put the world plausibly on a path toward” 4°C warming by the end of the century. Indeed, 2014 was the hottest year on record, and this year looks like being hotter still. The proportion of scientists who believe that warming is at least partly the result of human activity has steadily increased. So has the evidence that warming may bring with it not just higher temperatures, but more cataclysmic climatic events, such as hurricanes and floods, and events of greater severity and violence.

Grim stuff, and in spite of innumerable meetings, politicians have made only modest progress. True, China and the United States are talking more seriously about policies to cut their soaring output of warming gases, but it is now almost a quarter of a century since the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change first created an international agreement to tackle the greenhouse effect. Since then, the world has spewed out more carbon dioxide pretty much every year, and we burn even more coal—the most damaging fuel—than ever before. When the UN climate change conference assembles in Paris at the end of November, it will be the 21st gathering of the nations which signed the framework convention, and the eleventh meeting of the parties to the Kyoto Protocol which succeeded it. No wonder the conference’s aspiration, to achieve a legally binding and universal agreement on the climate from all the nations of the world, has been met with some scepticism.

Could economists come to the rescue? Three years ago, Dieter Helm, an economist and professor of energy policy at Oxford University, published a book called *The Carbon Crunch* which argued the case for a mixture of cost-effective energy policies—go for

gas, especially abundant shale gas—with a carbon tax and investment in clean technologies such as energy storage and electric vehicles. Don’t cover hillsides with uneconomic wind farms, he said; subsidising renewables can make energy production less climate-friendly, not more, because renewables need lots of continuous back-up non-renewable capacity. Introduce a tax with border carbon adjustments on imported carbon products, to stop the madness of importing goods that incorporate huge amounts of carbon-belching coal in their manufacture. To close factories in (fairly) clean Britain and replace their products with imports from (very) dirty India makes no sense at all.

Such views, which seem to be equally unpalatable to Greenpeace and to governments, are unlikely to make much progress in Paris. Meanwhile, Helm has moved on to another, even tougher issue than global warming: that of natural capital. He is the right person to take on this complex and profoundly important subject, which encompasses everything from birds and butterflies—through landscapes bleak or beautiful—to minerals in the ground and clean air and oceans. To discuss how we should treat the vast range of the bounties of nature, he brings to bear a long career of combining the pragmatic with the academic. Indeed, his rare ability to combine economic sophistication with articulate good sense has made him one of the most important commentators on energy, water and environmental policy. He has founded an economic consultancy, Oxera; he has advised successive governments and the European Commission on many aspects of infrastructure and the environment, regulation and resources; and he is involved in the work of a local conservation group.

He has two further attributes which define this book. He writes with clarity and precision, even when attempting to explain the complexities of national accounting and its relationship to natural capital, and he has chaired the government’s Natural Capital Committee through its first three years of existence. Indeed, the book is clearly to some extent a manifesto for the future of that committee and a bid to give it some teeth.

Teeth are clearly needed. Protecting the natural world from humanity’s relentless damage has been a glum story of incessant defeats and retreats. From the unsuccessful efforts of Octavia Hill, founder of the National Trust, to preserve Swiss Cottage Fields from developers, through extinctions and burning tropical forests and on to Kyoto’s limited achievements: saving nature has generally been a thankless and dispiriting task. As Shakespeare put it in a rather different context: “How with this rage shall beauty hold a plea,/Whose action is no stronger than a flower?”

## Natural Capital: Valuing the Planet

by Dieter Helm (Yale University Press, £20)



Frances Cairncross is an economist, writer and former Rector of Exeter College, Oxford





© DAVID MADISON / CORBIS

A grove of redwood trees, Sam McDonald State Park, California

Helm has something better than beauty to offer: proper accounting for natural assets, both renewable (like fish and forests) and non-renewable (like oil and minerals). We had better start using this tool properly, because the pressures on our natural capital, hefty though they are, will soon be vastly greater. We will need to feed at least another three billion people (“more extra people than the entire world’s population in the middle of the last century”). Economic growth on current trends could multiply the size of the global economy 16 times over by the end of the century. Global temperatures may rise by more than 4°C (assuming countries continue to ignore the *Carbon Crunch* solutions). Half of all species may vanish.

A first step to restrain the degradation and to begin to improve our natural capital would be to measure it properly and to incorporate it into economic policy. Moreover, protecting natural capital can bring economic benefits and go hand-in-hand with sustainable economic growth. Unless we measure and value the natural capital that is the raw material from which our economies are built, he argues, we cannot set a sustainable growth path, and we cannot make good choices. “What is measured tends to be what matters.”

The basic rule for a sustainable economy should be this: “The aggregate level of natural capital should not decline.” This rule, Helm argues, gives meaning to the idea of sustainability: it implies that we should pass on to the next generation a set of assets, nat-

**“Unless we measure and value natural capital, we cannot set a sustainable growth path or make good choices”**

ural and manmade, at least as good as those we inherited, even if humans have altered those assets. It should be the rock on which a sustainable economy is built. It would apply differently to renewable and non-renewable assets: the aggregate level of renewable assets would not decline, but the depletion of non-renewables such as coal and oil would be offset by compensation to future generations which might take the form of investing in assets that would improve the lives of the unborn, or by creating the sort of fund in which Norway has invested its oil money, or by spending on projects to save or repair renewable assets such as landscapes and habitats.

All of this raises some tough questions. How far can we—should we—substitute manmade assets for natural ones? Many environmentalists would say: never. No motorway should be built through this ancient woodland, however great the saving in time and petrol the new road would produce. Helm, by contrast, argues that the argument for or against the motorway is more likely to be persuasive if a serious attempt is found to value the woodland and balance it against the saving in time.

Such valuations are an imperfect art, as Helm freely admits. We know the market value of a non-renewable asset such as coal, but its true value should surely be docked to account for the environmental impacts of mining it and burning it. Those environmental costs need to be reflected in taxes, which in turn yield revenue that can be put towards environmental restoration. Valuing renewables is vastly more difficult, if only because many are not traded directly. How to value the existence of the oran- ►



gutan, or of the Lake District, or of the Arctic? There are proxies; the money tourists pay to visit Borneo, the value of a house near Windemere, the time and the money people pay to drive to a beauty spot.

But all techniques for valuing natural capital are fallible, in ways that Helm rightly acknowledges. Setting the right price of carbon is difficult enough. Indeed, it may be easier to set an overall limit on the growth in emissions, and then let the market set the price, as (more or less) happens with cap-and-trade mechanisms. Pricing a pristine Arctic or valuing the survival of the leopard is infinitely more difficult and controversial. Sometimes, the effort of finding a suitable mechanism to generate convincing valuations reminds one of the anonymous little rhyme: “Economists have come to feel/What can’t be measured isn’t real./The truth is always an amount/Count numbers, only numbers count.”

In the end, Helm understandably concludes that “prices might be imperfect but they are usually vastly superior to the alternatives.” But they are an essential foothold for good environmental policies. These come in three main kinds: compensation for environmental damage, taxes on polluters, and the protection of natural assets which are “public goods,” and thus would not otherwise be provided by the market. All three strands raise difficulties. Thus how does a house builder compensate for destroying

## “Setting the right price for carbon is difficult enough. Pricing a pristine Arctic is infinitely harder”

a forest in which nightingales sing? Who, exactly, is the polluter who causes a diesel engine to damage air quality: the oil company, the car manufacturer, the driver? How does one protect natural resources that nobody owns but everyone values, such as the deep ocean?

A first step in all this is to persuade governments to concentrate less on whether economic growth has gone up or down, and more on the overall state of assets, natural and man-made. After all, some economic growth is illusory, achieved only by using up natural capital whose true value exceeds that of the manmade assets it is deployed to create. So we should focus on measuring changes in our national wellbeing by auditing our assets, rather than on calculating changes in GDP. Are the roads getting better or worse? What is the state of our water and our air quality? Is biodiversity in good shape?

To handle the task, says Helm, we need the right institutions. Oddly, given the importance of natural capital, we have few with a mandate to protect or enhance it. Government departments tend to be captured by institutions which want to exploit the environment: farmers, oil companies, big producers. Even environment departments have their lobbyists, whether makers of solar panels or green campaigning groups. In the case of climate change, the creation of the Climate Change Committee has demonstrated ways in which institutional design can try to give targets credibility: it has statutory goals, and is answerable to Parliament for achieving them.

From his vantage point on the Natural Capital Committee, Helm regards the Climate Change Committee with some envy. His own group has the immense task of advising the government

on “the sustainable use of England’s natural capital; our forests, rivers, atmosphere, land, wildlife, oceans and other natural assets.” Yet it has no explicit, legally monitored targets on which it is answerable to Parliament, and its initial mandate ends this year. Instead, we need something stronger: “an overarching champion of natural capital... with a remit to hand down to the next generation a better set of natural capital assets.” It would report annually to Parliament. “The lesson from the Climate Change Committee experience,” Helm argues, “is that statutory backing is of considerable importance.”

Certainly the work that the Natural Capital Committee has done in its first three years is remarkable. It produces an annual report on the state of our natural capital; it has proposed a 25-year policy to analyse what needs to be done in order to better protect and improve our natural capital; it has been teaching companies about corporate accounting for natural capital. But its work has still not been received with the interest and agitation as, say, the reports of the Office for Budget Responsibility, which does another sort of reality check on government policies.

So does this mean that natural capital, like climate change, will continue to deteriorate? “The easy bit is climate change,” says Helm in his final chapter, because there are almost certainly lots of technological fixes that could radically cut emissions, though he adds ominously: “Put another way, without them the climate is probably stuffed, since existing renewables and existing nuclear cannot bridge the gap, and it is hard to imagine that global energy demand is going to fall without technological breakthroughs.”

And there are technological answers to some aspects of our ravaging of nature. We can use agricultural land more efficiently if we accept advances in the technology of food production (including genetically modified crops). We can use technology to help protect rainforests and species, and to work out which ecosystems matter most. We should use some of the vast revenues generated from the depletion of oil, coal, gas and other minerals. So the issue is ultimately political. “There is a massive problem. There is a solution... The choice is not as painful as some would have us believe... Sustainable economic growth is not low growth.”

In the past year, many more companies have decided to put an internal price on their carbon pollution, recognising that, sooner or later, governments will agree to make carbon pricing mandatory. It has taken a quarter of a century to get this far. Tackling the loss of natural capital—of biodiversity, of birds, bees and beauty—is just as urgent. We need to create the institutions which will help us to make a serious start. **P**



*“Miss Plunkett, make a note - I’m replacing you with an app!”*



**THE  
OLD  
VIC**

By  
**EUGENE  
O'NEILL**

Directed by  
**RICHARD  
JONES**

**LIMITED RUN**  
**17 OCT -  
21 NOV**



# THE HAIRY APE

FEATURING OLIVIER AWARD WINNER **BERTIE CARVEL**

## **Offer for Prospect readers**

**£35 Band A** (usually £55), **£25 Band B** (usually £45)

Quote '**HAprospect**'

Valid 23 Oct – 5 Nov inclusive

PREVIEWS PARTNER



**0844 871 7628**

**oldvictheatre.com**

PRINCIPAL PARTNER



Royal Bank of Canada

# The hit factory

A Swedish svengali has cracked the formula for the new pop age

JOHN HARRIS

Popular music was changed forever when a Swedish producer's in-car cassette machine broke, and he found himself unable to listen to anything other than a song called "All That She Wants."

It was 1992. The producer's name was Dag Krister Volle. Some people knew him as "Dagge," but he went about his musical business under the name of Denniz PoP. He apparently had a "childlike wonder" about him, and loathed music that was in any way anodyne or boring. As he saw it, "every note, word and beat had to have a purpose, or be fun." The song that got stuck in his tape deck was an early version of the eventual breakthrough hit for a quartet called Ace Of Base, who were led by a musician named Ulf Ekberg. At that stage, it was called "Mr Ace," and its creators obviously knew it lacked a certain something. Having heard what Denniz PoP had achieved with a minor Swedish hit entitled "Another Mother," they had sent it to him in the hope that he might help.

At first, Denniz PoP was not impressed at all. But as he drove his car each day and listened repeatedly, familiarity began to melt his scepticism and suggest that something could be done. Having met the group, he then took out half the instruments on the recording, and moved the whistled melody that closed the song to its introduction. Denniz PoP also pushed Ekberg to add more lyrics.

What resulted was seemingly gauche, clunky and devoid of much sense. The reggae-ish music sounded synthetic and

flimsy; the vocals were so treated with effects that they seemed almost inhuman. Ekberg later claimed that Ace of Base had an advantage in not being native English speakers, because he and his colleagues were able to treat the language "very disrespectful [sic], and just look for the word that sounded good with the melody." But even on that basis, the stuff they came up with was pretty awful:

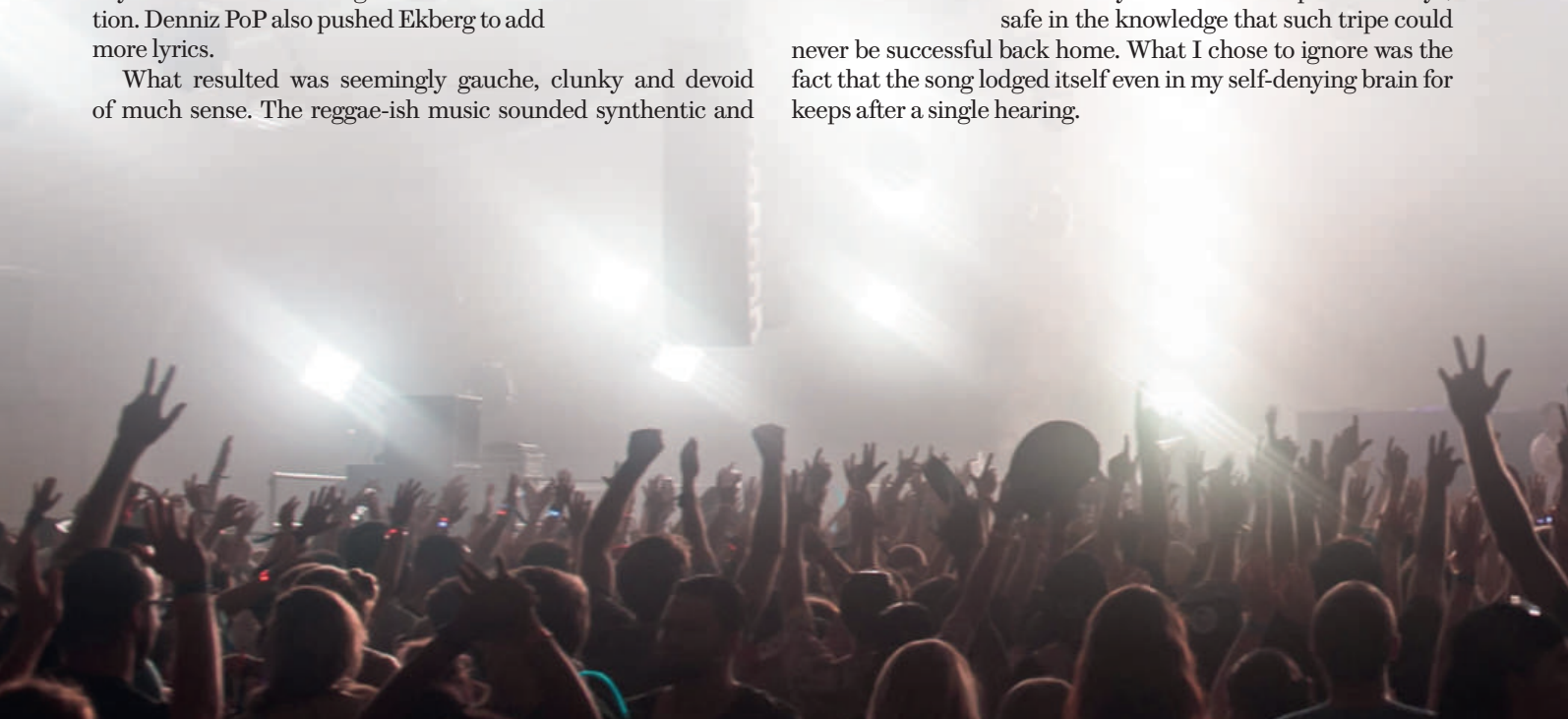
When she woke up late in the morning light  
And the day had just begun  
She opened up her eyes and thought  
Oh what a morning  
It's not a day for work  
It's a day for catching tan  
Just laying on the beach and having fun  
She's going to get you

The chorus was even worse: it was built around a refrain of "all that she wants, is another baby," which suggested the condition medical professionals know as secondary infertility, but was actually meant to refer to a quest for a lover. To rock snobs like me, this was the kind of fleeting hit that one occasionally hears on European holidays, safe in the knowledge that such tripe could

never be successful back home. What I chose to ignore was the fact that the song lodged itself even in my self-denying brain for keeps after a single hearing.

## The Song Machine: Inside the Hit Factory

by John Seabrook (*Jonathan Cape, £18.99*)





“All That She Wants” went to number one in 10 countries, including the UK. In the United States, it reached number two on the *Billboard* charts, and was certified platinum, denoting sales of one million copies. Denniz PoP and some of his Swedish associates were suddenly in demand, and about to push music somewhere new. If the cultural period running from the mid-1960s to the early 1990s was the rock age, we now live in the era of pop, and “All That She Wants” is the song that began it.

In a new book entitled *The Song Machine*, the *New Yorker* writer John Seabrook forensically tells the story of “All That She Wants,” and what it set in train: a new kind of industrialised popular music in which every last nuance is carefully considered, instant impact is all and songs are filled with enough sonic punch to monopolise people’s attention.

The story moves from the watershed success of Ace Of Base, through such international boy-band sensations as the Backstreet Boys and \*NSYNC, on through the rise and fall of Britney Spears and on to the modern pop aristocracy: Rihanna, Katy Perry and Taylor Swift. The speciality of the songwriters and producers who work with such artists, Seabrook says, is music “made for malls, stadiums, airports, casinos and gyms,” which is metaphorically “vodka-flavoured and laced with MDMA.” If you want a illustrative flavour, listen to Swift’s frantic 2014 masterpiece “Shake It Off”: as exciting a pop record as I have ever heard, and so addictive that having it buzzing around your head produces an anxious, unfulfilled feeling similar to needing a cigarette. The only cure is to listen to it again and again.

Seabrook calls tracks like this “industrial-strength products.” And self-evidently, they are made in an industrial kind of way. On the face of it, this is nothing new. Going back as far as the New York of the late 19th century (the home of the cluster of songwriters and publishers based in Tin Pan Alley), a lot of popular music has always been the product of calculating hackwork. In the 1960s, there was Manhattan’s Brill Building, where songwriters such as Burt Bacharach, Hal David, Gerry Goffin and Carole King worked at pianos squeezed into small cubicles. In Detroit, Tamla Motown’s creative model ensured that harried writers and producers had to have a keen understanding of popular musical appetites. As the American author Nelson George put it in his definitive history of Motown, *Where Did Our Love Go?*, “if your music was constantly deemed inferior, ridicule and dismissal were the consequences.” Paul McCartney has talked

**John Harris** writes on politics and culture for the *Guardian*. He is the author of “So Now Who Do We Vote For?” and “The Last Party: Britpop, Blair And The Demise of English Rock”



of sitting down with John Lennon with their minds on financial reward rather than self-expression, and trying to “write a swimming pool.” But even compared to these examples, modern pop is created on a much more calculated, almost neurotic basis.

The sophistication of digital recording means that the fine details of a piece of music can be endlessly assembled and reassembled, on a whim. Sounds that may have begun as drums and guitars—or rather, their simulations—can easily take on novel, disorientating textures. This trickery applies even to the human voice, often treated with a modern device called Auto-Tune, which tends to make singers sound like mellifluous androids. The overall sound of a song is also frequently subject to a technique called “dynamic range compression,” which ensures that a close-miked whisper can be as head-turning as a cranked-up keyboard solo, and a track’s component parts combine to produce something impossibly loud. Modern pop, in other words, has cut-through: even in the noisiest environments—shopping centres, family cars, crowded bars—it demands to be listened to.

The fact that pirated music and online streaming has so squeezed music industry profits means that singers are, more often than not, on tour. Their sometimes relatively lowly role in the creation of recorded music fits with a new model in which producers, writers and executives are clearly in charge—and besides, studio-quality vocals can now be recorded at breakneck speed in hotel rooms and on tour buses, in between live performances. If that part of the process often seems to be rushed, the standard at which everyone now aims is that of the “one-listen” record, which can catch the listener’s attention as they whizz through Spotify and YouTube. That may sound like an impossible demand, but thanks to technology, quite apart from the music’s writing and recording, there are sophisticated means of increasing the chances of coming up with an instant hit.

In 2002, two American entrepreneurs, Rick Bisceglia and Guy Zapoleon, began marketing an online market-research system—now called HitPredictor—that would play music to carefully-selected panels of listeners in order to assess its commercial potential. The idea was so ▶





**Hit machine:** Max Martin receives the award for Producer of the Year (Non-classical) at the Grammys in Los Angeles in February

popular among record labels that the pair soon sold out to the US media giant Clear Channel. “We pick songs and play a significant amount of the core part of the song, usually about a minute and a half... and then get [people] to vote,” Zapoleon explained. In the past, songwriters usually had to depend on gut instinct alone—or, if they were lucky, the advice of a record company’s Artist and Repertoire (A&R) department—before presenting their work to the public. By contrast, when you hear a 21st-century hit, there is a reasonable likelihood that it has been nipped and tucked in line with detailed consumer feedback.

**“When you hear a 21st-century hit there is a likelihood it has been nipped and tucked in line with consumer feedback”**

What decisively separates 21st-century pop from what went before is its geographical and psychological heartland: Scandinavia. Among the most successful modern writing and production teams are Tor Hermansen and Mikkel Eriksen. They trade as Stargate and are based in New York today, but they began making music in their hometown of Trondheim, in Norway. Their musical backgrounds are steeped in American hip-hop and R&B, but they owe their success to their fusion of these genres with what Hermansen calls “choral, melodic music.” In Seabrook’s book, Hermansen recalls that “when we first got here, American pop music was linear and minimalistic, with few chord changes, and no big lift in the chorus.” As evidenced by huge Stargate hits by Beyoncé and Rihanna, this has now changed, thanks to a very unlikely culture clash: what Seabrook calls “a perfect hybrid of Nordic and urban.”

As the story of “All That She Wants” attests, modern pop’s birthplace was Sweden: thanks not just to Denniz PoP (who died of stomach cancer in 1998), but also a gaggle of other musical svengalis who worked alongside him at a Stockholm set-up called Cheiron Studios. The most successful is Martin Sandberg, the one-time singer with a Swedish heavy metal band called It’s Alive. He was persuaded by Denniz PoP to reinvent himself as Max Martin, and in that guise he wrote a worldwide 1998 hit that served notice of the crisp, clinical music that would increasingly dominate the global mainstream: Britney Spears’s “... Baby One More Time.” In the UK and US, its pay-off—“Hit me baby one more time!”—triggered a controversy about double-meanings and violence against women. In his Swedish innocence, Martin had thought he was using a harmless synonym for “Call me.”

Martin has written or co-written 54 songs that have featured in the American charts, which places him ahead of Madonna and the Beatles. His early oeuvre includes the Backstreet Boys’ “I Want It That Way,” as well as songs recorded by Celine Dion and Westlife. More recently, he has co-written Katy Perry’s vast hit “I Kissed A Girl,” Jessie J’s “Domino” and the aforementioned Taylor Swift hit “Shake It Off.” He could walk down the main streets of any world city and go completely unrecognised—for what it’s worth, he has lank, centre-parted hair and an uneven, dark-brown beard, and has a fondness for V-necked T-shirts—but he is as central a player in the popular music of our age as Lennon, McCartney, Brian Wilson, David Bowie and Marc Bolan were in theirs.

Though he specialises in what we now know as “pop,” Martin’s talent is partly traceable to his background in rock music and in particular, the influence of Def Leppard. The band emerged from Sheffield in the early 1980s as an orthodox heavy metal group and achieved huge transatlantic success thanks to music whose processed sounds and commercial sharpness owed much ►





# THE CRIME MUSEUM UNCOVERED



'This... was to have been a 'contract' killing for the Krays... When the Home Office pathologist examined the case he described it as the most deadly murder weapon he had ever seen.'

## Book tickets now

[museumoflondon.org.uk/crimemuseum](http://museumoflondon.org.uk/crimemuseum)

#CrimeMuseum

📍 Barbican, St Paul's, Moorgate

**9 October 2015 – 10 April 2016**

**MAYOR OF LONDON**  
OFFICE FOR POLICING AND CRIME

Media partner

**The Telegraph**

Quote: Leonard 'Nipper' Read, the Detective Superintendent who led the Krays investigation, 1967-69

Curated from the collections of the Metropolitan Police

more to pop. Much of Martin's work fuses lessons learned from this stuff with the rhythms and pace of black American R&B, otherwise known as "urban" music. Indeed, as with Stargate's productions, it is difficult to avoid the conclusion that its global reach is down to a crafty mixture of contrasting sensibilities and musical genres: rock and pop, black and white, American and European.

Some of these elements are quintessentially Scandinavian. One is "Schlager music," a catch-all term for the highly melodic, often sentimental stuff (ideally suited to lachrymose singalongs) that has national variants all over Europe, but which, in the continent's far north, has long seeped into pop music in general. Its influence was there in the music so successfully made by ABBA, which sometimes suggested a kind of pop in which the influence of the US had purposely been toned down. Later on, when an ingrained love of Schlager-esque music collided with latter-day dance and R&B records, the potential for something hugely commercial was clear.

**T**hough "Shake It Off" runs it a close second, the single that shines most light on Martin's talent is probably Kelly Clarkson's "Since U Been Gone", another worldwide hit, released in November 2004. Clarkson had won the first series of *American Idol*, the US equivalent of *The X Factor*, in September 2002, and released a debut album. Her career was being overseen by Clive Davis, the renowned US music executive who played a key role in the careers of Aretha Franklin, Barry Manilow, Rod Stewart, Whitney Houston and others, and who had introduced Ace Of Base to the US and made "All That She Wants" a huge American hit. He was also one of the first enthusiasts for the kind of obsessive market research offered by HitPredictor.

For Clarkson's second album, he needed a lead-off hit. When Martin played Davis a demo recording of a new song, without vocals, he thought he heard it. The piece had been written by Martin and Lukasz Gottwald (aka "Dr Luke"), a sometime guitarist in the house band on the US TV show *Saturday Night Live*. Clarkson was instructed to travel to Stockholm and record with the two of them. Apparently she hated every minute. As Seabrook writes, apart from anything else, Martin's "obsessive 'comping' of the vocals—comparing multiple takes of the vocal parts of a song to find the perfectly sung syllable in each take, and pasting all of them back together into a complete vocal take—drove her mad."

"Since U Been Gone" is a remarkable piece of work. It's a pop song partly built on rock elements: the incessant, buzzing intro (what Gottwald knowingly calls his "bad guitar" sound) with which the song begins, and a thrashing chorus presaged by a hint of feedback. Its title may or may not have been stolen from "Since You Been Gone," a 1979 hit for the hard-rock band Rainbow.

In the video, as well as trashing her fictional ex-boyfriend's apartment, Clarkson delivers the song in front of a moshing crowd of young people, backed by indie-rock musicians straight out of central casting. But what they are miming to is not really a rock song at all. From her android-ish vocals, through the metronomic electric percussion, to the fact that most of the guitars do not really sound like guitars, it represents what the French cultural theorist Jean Baudrillard called "hyperreality": simulation so removed from what is being simulated that it rockets off into a space all its own.

Martin and Gottwald had come up with the initial idea for "Since U Been Gone" after listening to "Maps," a 2003 single by the New York indie-rock trio the Yeah Yeah Yeahs, something evidenced

## Ten hits from Max Martin's song factory



**"I Want It That Way"**  
Backstreet Boys (1999)

**"It's Gonna Be Me"**  
\*NSYNC (2000)

**"Since U Been Gone"**  
Kelly Clarkson (2004)



**"I Kissed A Girl"**  
Katy Perry (2008)

**"So What"**  
Pink (2008)

**"Domino"**  
Jessie J (2011)

**"One More Night"**  
Maroon 5 (2012)



**"Shake It Off"**  
Taylor Swift (2014)

**"Can't Feel My Face"**  
The Weeknd (2015)



by a guitar solo they lifted wholesale from it. "Maps" is a beautiful song about heartbreak, split between music and vocals that evoke emotional fragility and desperate upset, and volcanic explosions of noise. But Martin thought it lacked something.

"I said, 'I love this song!'" Gottwald told Seabrook. "And Max said, 'If they would only just write a damn pop chorus on it.'" What Martin couldn't understand, perhaps, is that some songs become a soundtrack to life's most profound moments precisely because of such absences. However one might choose to evoke the end of a relationship in music, a "damn pop chorus" may not be most suitable vehicle.

"Maps" reached number 87 on the US charts, and number 26 in the UK. "Since U Been Gone", by contrast, climbed to number two in the US, and was a top five hit in Austria, Australia, Ireland, the Netherlands and the UK. Industrially-created music begets industrial-scaled success, which may be why, over 20 years after it started, the new pop age shows no sign of ending. **P**





## THE TT COLLECTION

AT THE CUTTING EDGE OF TRADITION. Bold simplicity of line belies a meticulous refinement of construction. The understated elegance of edge-stained cut-out pockets, turn-over edges and soft, fine calf leather, fashioned from eighty years of innovation. Only the tireless pursuit of handcrafted perfection gives rise to such singular style.

ETTINGER. TO EACH THEIR OWN.

ETTINGER.CO.UK



ESTD 1934

**ETTINGER**

LONDON



80 YEARS IN THE MAKING

## Arts & books

Matt Ridley's evolution **John Kay** 70  
 Orhan Pamuk: I won't keep quiet **Sameer Rahim** 72  
 The comic rage of Woody Allen **Sam Tanenhaus** 74  
 Iris Murdoch's revelatory letters **Anne Chisholm** 77  
 Books in brief 80

# Smarter than people

Evolution can produce better effects than design, argues *John Kay*

### The Evolution of Everything

by Matt Ridley (Fourth Estate, £20)

Evolution is descent with modification. Adaptations happen: some adaptations are advantageous and advantageous adaptations are replicated. In Darwinian natural selection, genes experience random mutation, a few of these mutations favour reproduction and those that do spread through the population. The insight that this process could produce complex and functional designs far beyond the capacity of any designer is a transformational idea in human thought.

Matt Ridley, the author of *The Evolution of Everything*, began as an academic biologist, then science editor of *The Economist*, and, notoriously, Chairman of Northern Rock. Today he sits as a Conservative peer in the House of Lords and tweaks the tail of environmentalists with a sceptical take on climate change and an antipathy to gloom merchants. His last book, *The Rational Optimist*, developed that stance.

In *The Evolution of Everything*, Ridley returns to the other principal theme of his writing: that evolution can be applied to many fields other than biology. In *The Origins of Virtue*, Ridley argued that conventional morality is the product of evolution. That is where he begins the present volume, but he goes on in subsequent chapters to discuss the role of evolution in culture, technology, education and religion.

Ridley pursues a reductionist approach to enquiry that seeks to find a scientific basis for social and natural phenomena. Using the vivid phrase of Daniel Dennett, the leading philosopher of evolution, he resists all offers of "skyhooks," or arguments that ultimately derive explanation from some exterior authority. The most common skyhook has been religion, but the Darwinian achievement was to show how the natural world could be explained without God. In the words of the famous—if perhaps apocryphal—remark with which Pierre-Simon Laplace ushered in the Enlightenment: "I

had no need of that hypothesis."

This threat to religious doctrine was behind the resistance to evolutionary arguments in the 19th century, and is still the source of resistance in parts of the United States. The unwillingness to contemplate genetic explanations is also an unintended legacy of Adolf Hitler. Ridley describes how eugenics commanded wide intellectual and political support from the late 19th century through to the 1930s. But the repudiation of racism after the Nazi genocides was followed by desegregation in the US. Later the language of anti-discrimination extended to gender inequality and in due course to disability, age and sexual preferences.

For a generation, anything that seemed to give credence to the social effects of genetic selection was dismissed in politically correct circles. This was the era of the "blank slate," the idea that we are born identical, and that everything that differentiates us as adults is the product of our environment.

That claim could not survive our growing knowledge of the mechanisms of inheritance and natural selection that followed the discovery of DNA. But while rarely a week goes by without a tabloid report of the discovery of a "gene for x," anyone who uses genetic arguments to account for social as well as physical differences does so at great peril.

The entomologist EO Wilson, whose expertise was in how ants produced a cohesive social order, attempted to apply his vast knowledge more broadly; but after he published a book on sociobiology in the 1970s, a pitcher of water was poured over his head at a meeting of the American Association for the Advancement of Science. Even in 2006, Larry Summers left his role as President of Harvard University after suggesting that it was worth exploring the possibility of a genetic component in the underrepresentation of women in physics departments.

Evolutionary explanations are too often Panglossian—whatever exists must be for the best—but evolution favours what is good at reproducing itself, not what is good. Ridley describes the controversy over "junk DNA,"



the elements of the genome for which no useful function has been discovered but which simply replicate themselves through the generations. Junk DNA has its parallels in the real world: meaningless rituals, parasitic corporations in finance and government contracting, oligarchic influence.

This is a difficult area to move into with confidence but Ridley makes a brave attempt. The book displays his wide and deep knowledge of many different fields. It is fast paced and elegantly written. Few readers will come away without fresh information and a challenge to their preconceptions.

Gaps in our scientific knowledge have historically been filled by appealing to the gods.





**A robot teacher in South Korea: Ridley, in his new book, examines “the role of evolution in culture, technology, education”**

Authority for moral prescription is derived from religious doctrine, or cults surrounding prophets, gurus or political leaders. As the power of religion has waned, the space has been filled by mysticism and environmentalism. The moral codes of established religions have been supplemented, or replaced, by a language of human rights.

This resilience shows how persistent our need for skyhooks is. Few parents, faced with an insistent “why?” from their children, have not had ultimate resort to “because I say so.” Ridley describes how, in his lifetime, intolerance of homosexuality has declined while that of paedophilia has increased. Indeed

the shift is so extreme that it is now morally mandatory to be intolerant of intolerance of homosexuality and equally morally mandatory to be intolerant of any tolerance of paedophilia; lest there be any doubt, he emphasises that he approves of these requirements. What is interesting about this shift in thinking is that religious authorities have followed rather than led widely held public perceptions of the relevant moral values.

What has caused the shift? Perhaps there has been a change in values that opposes interference in consensual sex between adults and deplores abuse of children; but

one needs to explain why these values were not widely held a century ago. As reductionism progresses most people reach for a skyhook, appealing to a notion of human rights from which these principles are derived.

There is something unsatisfying about the wide-ranging moral relativism that simply observes that some moral principles were generally held then but that we adhere different ones now. At this point the evolutionary explanation amounts to no more than a restatement of the observation that things change. Yet an account of how changed perceptions of morality co-evolved with other scientific discoveries and social and tech- ▶

nological shifts is more compelling than the idea that there were universal moral truths our predecessors were too stupid to discern.

It is a weakness of evolutionary explanations that it is too easy to account for everything in evolutionary terms. Since we know very little about the lives of our ancestors, we can invent stories in which our experiences there hardwired us for what we do today.

It is easier to dispense with the skyhooks provided by the innovative genius or the great leader. Ridley emphasises how most practical innovations—such as telephones or televisions—were made by several people at about the same time. Nobel Prize-winners are often lucky to have pipped someone with an equally plausible case for the same award. Did Deng Xiaoping really change China, or was he the man who led China when those changes happened?

Yet in his anxiety to emphasise the ubiquity of evolutionary processes, Ridley goes too far. His concept of evolution is too broad. Adaptations are often intentional rather than random, selection not simply a matter of reproductive fitness. In *Nature via Nurture*, Ridley argued persuasively that the distinction between the two causal explanations is a false dichotomy, the effects of our genetic inheritance are largely moulded by our envi-

ronment. In the present book he emphasises nature over nurture, denying that parental influence has any significant influence on child development. He is reluctant to acknowledge how frequently we observe co-evolution, in which social and economic practices and genetic traits evolve together. The elegant story told by William Durham of how lactose tolerance in adults and dairy farming evolved together where climatic conditions favoured that form of agriculture, is discarded in favour of a linear process in which the genes follow the technology.

Ridley's anxiety to minimise the role of conscious direction leads to a denial of the role of government that at times degenerates into a right-wing tirade. His criticisms of the evolution—or often non-evolution—of educational practice, are often well made, and he is right to point to the success of private schools in countries with dysfunctional governments, but he does not mention that the most admired school systems in the world are the state systems found in countries such as Finland and South Korea.

Similarly, it is not tenable to claim that neither universities nor government play a role in innovation comparable to that of private efforts. The development of computing, antibiotics and nuclear power—perhaps the

most significant innovations of the last century—were directly attributable to academic research and government funding, and without these they would not have occurred on any comparable timescale, or even at all.

Ridley's provocative conclusion is that things that go well in human history are unintended, while things that go badly are the product of deliberation. Up to a point. No one intended the First World War, the Great Depression, or the 2008 global financial crisis. Yet there is something in Ridley's claim; these disasters were the consequence of large decisions taken by people who did not really understand what they were doing, or the likely consequences of their actions. Evolution is smarter than people; or at least the collective wisdom that is accumulated through decades of trial and error is a surer guide to action and the shaping of institutions, than the direction of men (almost invariably men) who knew less about the world than they thought. The wise remark of Scottish Enlightenment philosopher Adam Ferguson that effective human institutions are often the outcome of human actions but not human design, with which Ridley begins his book, bears regular repetition.

John Kay's latest book is *"Other People's Money"* (Profile)

## “Erdoğan wants to control everything”

Nobel laureate Orhan Pamuk says he cannot keep quiet while Turkey's President attacks freedom of speech. He spoke to *Sameer Rahim*

The Turkish novelist Orhan Pamuk has never been afraid of speaking out. In 2005, he broke a national taboo by speaking to a Swiss newspaper about the killing of one million Armenians during the collapse of the Ottoman Empire. Subsequently, he was prosecuted for “insulting Turkishness” in a case that brought him international attention. In 2006 he was awarded the Nobel Prize for literature, the committee praising a writer, “who in the quest for the melancholic soul of his native city has discovered new symbols for the clash and interlacing of cultures.” During those years, Pamuk told me when I met him in London, he felt he became “too political,” asked to comment about events in his native land in a way western novelists usually are not. But the genial Pamuk also admitted that he finds it difficult to “keep my mouth shut” about the state of his country.

I asked him whether the Turkish President Recep Tayyip Erdoğan, of the Islamist Justice and Development Party (AKP), has damaged Turkey's secular identity. “Before Erdoğan came to power 13 years ago, everyone rightly thought secularism was under threat,” he told me. “Now, according to a newspaper poll, only 5 per cent of the popu-

lation are worried about Turkey's secularism, but 67 per cent think he is too authoritarian.” Erdoğan won a landslide parliamentary victory in 2002 with support from mainly poor and religious Turks. Since then he has intensified his grip on power. Last year he became the country's President and began turning the ceremonial position into a political power base. Pamuk is disturbed by Erdoğan's manoeuvres. “He has violated Montesquieu's rules over the division between the judicial, legislative and executive powers. He does this without even hiding his manipulations.”

Pamuk is most worried about Erdoğan's attitude to freedom of speech. “He is pressuring journalists and newspapers too much,” he said. “This is not acceptable.” As a Nobel prize-winner and internationally renowned writer, Pamuk is freer to criticise the government than ordinary Turkish journalists. I sensed he was speaking on their behalf. Turkey, he said, is not a “full democracy.” The President “wants to control everything,” even though, as the inconclusive national elections in June showed, the AKP's support is dwindling. Sixty per cent of Turks did not vote for Erdoğan's party, and even conservative nationalists are uncomfortable with the pow-

ers he now claims as President.

Born in 1952 in a wealthy area of Istanbul, Pamuk grew up in the westernised Turkey created by Mustafa Kemal Atatürk. In his seven acclaimed novels, Pamuk ranges from the Ottoman-set *My Name is Red* (1998) to a powerful analysis of Islamism in modern Turkey in *Snow* (2002), two themes that now dominate his country's cultural and political landscape. In January, Erdoğan was mocked for welcoming the Palestinian President Mahmoud Abbas to his palace with soldiers in Ottoman regalia. Pamuk has in the past compared the President to an ageing sultan.

Pamuk's characters often yearn for the Ottoman era, and his fiction explores how such feelings can be exploited by politicians. *Snow*, set in the eastern city of Kars, follows a poet investigating the suicides of religious girls forbidden by their schools to wear headscarves—a long-standing controversial issue in Turkey. The novel, published before the Islamists came to power, seems prescient. “We need to make distinctions here,” Pamuk told me. “In *Snow*, I described two kinds of Islamist: one is a fundamentalist terrorist called Blue who is an extremely bad guy. Then there is Muhtar, also an Islamist, who





**Orhan Pamuk: “The more middle-class people there are, the more they demand middle-class freedoms.”**

ginal leftist parties” and secularists opposed to the government. “I was happy to see liberals expressing themselves,” said Pamuk, “but those who said it was some uprising to overthrow the government were exaggerating; it was nothing like that. Maybe there were some angry people throwing stones, but they were neither realistic nor justified.” The recent improvement in Turkey’s economy, Pamuk believes, encourages such movements. “The more middle-class people there are, the more they demand middle-class freedoms.”

Pamuk’s latest novel, *A Strangeness in My Mind*, explores the expansion of Istanbul and the resurgence of conservative nationalism from the perspective of a poor immigrant from the east who works as a street-vendor. Mevlut is not especially religious or political but he votes for the Islamists because he is attracted by their claim to revive the Ottoman glory days. Mevlut is something of a relic himself. He goes from street to street selling *boza*, a fermented wheat drink popular with the Ottomans. His customers pay him not so much for the drink, but for the nostalgia it evokes. Mevlut, Pamuk told me, knows exactly the part he is playing. “This is a self-conscious situation—*boza* sellers know that their sales are highly related to romantic ideas of the Ottoman past.” I asked whether he drank *boza*. “In my childhood I liked *boza* very much,” said Pamuk, “but now I’m not sure whether I like it because of its taste or because of the ritual... I’ve never met anyone who really loves it, or drinks it everyday.” As Istanbul modernised, Pamuk told me, the mystique of *boza*-sellers increased, as the old world they represented faded away.

*Boza* is a mildly alcoholic drink but many conservative Muslims who drink it—and sell it—deny it is intoxicating. This was what made it so popular in the Ottoman era and why it should have become redundant when Atatürk legalised beer and wine. Pamuk said he loved the irony that this “was a beverage invented by Muslims to enjoy alcohol. There is a lot of bad faith in denying there is alcohol in the drink. In fact, I got into a slight controversy when the book was published in Turkey in December. TV journalists asked *boza*-sellers whether Pamuk had helped sales. They replied yes, but Pamuk is spreading misinformation by saying there was alcohol in *boza*.”

Mevlut’s attitude is that “just because something isn’t strictly Islamic, doesn’t mean it can’t be holy too.” This reflects Pamuk’s view. “It’s a political thing and also a very private thing,” he told me. “What is our identity based upon? If it’s Islam then we shouldn’t be drinking *boza*. But if it’s based on layers of national history then you should drink it, because it reminds you of that history.” Mevlut feels a deep connection to his ►

© ULLSTEIN BILD / GETTY IMAGES

would probably have voted for Erdoğan if his party had existed then. The fact that both are using Islam in politics does not mean they are the same: they are very different. There is a difference between a conservative and a fundamentalist.”

In the last two years, the ban on headscarves in Turkish public buildings has been repealed—a measure fiercely protested against by some secularists. Pamuk, however, supports the move. “Just two weeks ago we had the first minister appointed who wears a headscarf [Ayşen Gürçan, in charge of family and social policies]. I don’t see this as secularism in Turkey being destroyed: 65 or 70 per cent of Turkish women wear headscarves and if you don’t let them enter government and social life, it is discrimination. If I criticise Erdoğan for violating secularism, it is

when he uses offensive language about feminism or alcohol.” But although the President is famous for his undiplomatic language—in 2011 he said that his enemies accused him of being Georgian, and “they have said even uglier things: they have called me Armenian”—Pamuk claimed he wasn’t successful in “implementing all the things he preaches about. The nation fights back.”

Pamuk sympathised with the environmental protests that erupted in Istanbul’s Gezi Park in 2013. Erdoğan wanted to replace the city’s only remaining park with a shopping mall, a symbol of the city’s rapid economic improvement that some believe has damaged Istanbul’s ambience. The protesters were “a very determined but naive green movement,” said Pamuk, that were later joined by “the usual suspects, the mar-

country's past: the "unintelligible Ottoman writing on a broken fountain with its brass taps long dried up." Pamuk, whose writing is suffused with the Arabic and Persian words that Atatürk tried to ban, told me that "in every civilisation there is an aura of dignity that comes from old things, whether that comes from your religion or someone else's... It's hard to evoke that sense of belonging through history without objects, architecture, pictures and texts." In the 1970s, he said, Istanbul was "a kind of open museum," that has now been banished, "irony of ironies," by the conservatives, in the name of economic progress. "The past is always political," Pamuk told me. "Eric Hobsbawm's *The Invention of Tradition* has taught us that. The past is an immense sea which we edit to a glass of water—or *boza*!"

Pamuk's great subject is the effect of westernisation on his country: a subject he shares with post-colonial writers such as VS Naipaul, a fellow Nobel Prize winner. Pamuk told me that although he had "learnt a lot from Naipaul," the countries they wrote about had significantly different histories. India and Africa were "wounded by imperialist western colonisers, but Turkey was never colonised. Turkey's westernisation was self-

imposed. This meant becoming western had a prestigious utopian ring. Naipaul focuses on these betrayals. He has a good eye for irony and looks down upon the vanity of post-colonial nations, the new rulers who may be even worse than the colonising Englishman."

Five years ago there were serious discussions about Turkey joining the European Union. Pamuk thinks it is a shame that never happened. "It didn't work out," said Pamuk, "and I'm not only going to blame Europe for that. We Turks didn't do our homework on free speech. Cyprus was still a problem, and

**"I simply believe in free speech, I believe in respect for minorities and I believe in having a full democracy"**

Turkey did not meet the Copenhagen criteria. Some of our nationalists didn't want Turkey in the EU either, at most only 55 per cent of Turks wanted to join." Have attitudes changed now the eurozone is in trouble? "Yes, the dream has faded a bit with all the economic difficulties. For the time being it is

off the agenda."

Europeans often look to Turkey as a model for how west and east can integrate. "It would be vain for me to say we are a model," Pamuk said. "I am a lover of my country, but my job is to be critical of its institutions. I'm not a utopian: I simply believe in free speech, I believe in respect for minorities and I believe in having a full democracy."

I sense Pamuk sometimes tires of political questions. At heart he is an aesthete. "I am not by nature a political person," he admitted. "I was criticised by the previous generation of more socially committed writers for being a bourgeois writing about bourgeois life." But he feels compelled to speak out. "When someone asks your opinion about something, what can you say: 'Sorry, I only write novels'? You can't say that."

I mention one of the epigraphs he chose for his political novel *Snow*, a quotation from the 19th-century French writer Stendhal: "Politics in a literary work are a pistol-shot in the middle of a concert, a crude affair." Pamuk corrected me: "Yes, but the quotation goes on another line: 'a crude affair, though one impossible to ignore'."

Orhan Pamuk's *A Strangeness in My Mind* is published by Faber. (See review on p81)

## Laughter in the dark

Woody Allen is a phenomenon but a foul dust floats in his wake, says *Sam Tanenhaus*

### Woody Allen: a Retrospective

by Tom Shone (Thames & Hudson, £29.95)

The "American Century"—if you recall the phrase—began in December 1941, with the attack on Pearl Harbor, but ended well ahead of schedule, on 11th September 2001. Sixty years felt about right for a nation powered by the fumes of youth. But that was yesterday. America has since become a country of, if not precisely for, old men (and women). The two leading candidates for the Democratic presidential nomination are 68 (Hillary Clinton) and 74 (Bernie Sanders). Vice President Joe Biden, limbering up on the sidelines, turns 73 in November.

But they are sprigs compared to our great geriatric artists, who refuse to yield the stage, instead embarrassing us, and sometimes themselves, with their unbudging presence. Philip Roth's vow to stop writing fiction, in November 2012 (four months before he turned 80), was instantly transformed into a marathon farewell tour. Meanwhile Bob Dylan (who will turn 75 in May) continues to exhaust his fans with his "Never Ending Tour." In October, he was booked for 24 gigs, nine in the UK alone.

And then there is Woody Allen, on the verge of his 80th birthday and as busy as ever.

His most recent film, *Irrational Man*, is struggling in cinemas—win some, lose some—another is in production, and a TV series is due for streaming on Amazon (this from a dinosaur who still pounds the keys on the manual typewriter he's had since he was 16).

But Allen is a phenomenon, who even at this advanced stage is able to surprise. *Match Point* (2005) and *Vicky Cristina Barcelona* (2008) are more alive than work by directors half his age. And not so long ago, he had his biggest box-office smash (*Midnight in Paris*). How does he do it? Perhaps because he doesn't know quite where he's going next. "No American dramatist has done more to document the pleasures, pitfalls, and withdrawal pains of imagining the world other than it is," Tom Shone writes in the text accompanying *Woody Allen: A Retrospective*, a luxuriant photo history of Allen's work. "Dramatist," as Shone knows—and amply demonstrates—could be replaced by "fabulist," "comedian" or "auteur." The singularity of Allen's persona—the mussy hair and owl-like spectacles, the mournful oblong face, the weirdly energised droopiness—obscures his protean nature, and the many stages he has restlessly passed through.

He began in the 1950s as an underage gag-writing prodigy for Sid Caesar, then

TV's best comedian, and then attained stardom with his own standup. Allen could have made a fine career on Broadway after *Play It Again, Sam*, rivalling Neil Simon. But he was more serious. His *New Yorker* pieces include the classics "The Whore of Mensa" and "The Kugelmass Episode," written when Jewish-style neurosis had become—amazingly, in retrospect—a dominant American mode.

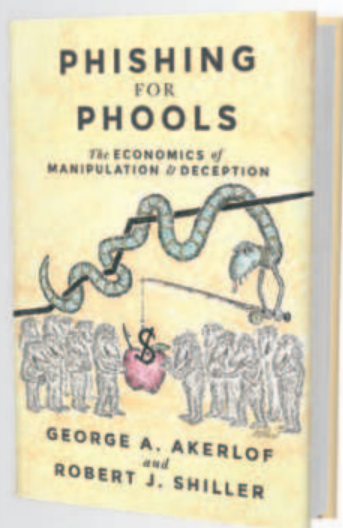
But what matters most are the films, almost 50 of them. Classics in assorted sizes, shapes and genres: the early madcap hilarities (*Bananas*, *Sleeper*), the wistful romantic comedies (*Annie Hall*, *Manhattan*), the post-modern experiments (*Zelig*, *The Purple Rose of Cairo*), the stately Bergmanesque moral dramas (*Hannah and her Sisters*, *Crimes and Misdemeanors*), the tender nostalgia pieces (*Broadway Danny Rose*, *Radio Days*). Together they form the most complete and varied oeuvre this side of Stanley Kubrick's.

The thread that connects Allen's work is the vision of American city life as secret paradise, the site of conquest and ego-enriching romance rather of corrupting sin. It is a familiar theme for the American Jewish artist. Saul Bellow was a prince of the city. So was Norman Mailer. Woody Allen is a third.

A child of the Great Depression, born and raised in Brooklyn, Allen didn't just make ▶



# Changing the conversations that change the world



## Phishing for Phools

The Economics of Manipulation and Deception

George A. Akerlof  
& Robert J. Shiller

*"Phishing for Phools is a coherent and highly plausible explanation of why markets—although usually beneficial—can lead to undesirable outcomes. The book takes an intriguing approach and gives many interesting examples."*

—Diane Coyle, author of *GDP: A Brief but Affectionate History*

Cloth \$24.95 | £16.95



## Europe's Orphan

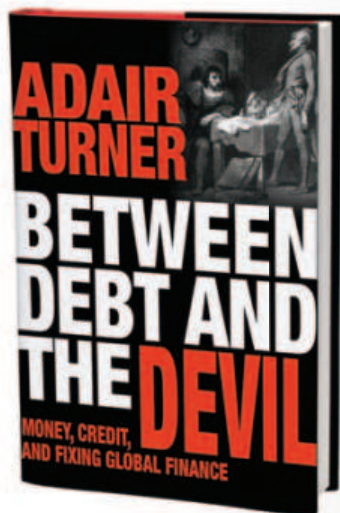
The Future of the Euro and the Politics of Debt

Martin Sandbu

*"[A] stimulating and entertaining book. . . [Sandbu] has performed a public service by challenging the present dreary consensus on the fate of the euro and, in his final chapter, by reminding us what the single currency was for."*

—Richard Lambert, *Prospect*

Cloth \$29.95 | £19.95



## Between Debt and the Devil

Money, Credit, and Fixing Global Finance

Adair Turner

*"This is the most penetrating analysis of the inherent imperfections of our financial system to appear since the crash of 2008. It will and should provoke extensive debates about the policies needed to avoid future crises."*

—George Soros

Cloth \$29.95 | £19.95



## On Inequality

Harry G. Frankfurt

*"Economic equality is one of today's most overrated ideas, and Harry G. Frankfurt's highly compelling book explains exactly why."*

—Tyler Cowen, author of *Average Is Over*

*"This is the sort of philosophy that ought to be more widely available."*

—Gideon A. Rosen, Princeton University

Cloth \$14.95 | £10.95

it across the river in Manhattan. He subdued the city through lethal comedy. His New York revels in opulence even as it peels away the myth of America—the dream of “freedom” that condemns the dreamer to loneliness, violence and despair. We deceive ourselves if we overlook how brutal Allen’s films often are, beneath the one-liners and the sweet jazz soundtracks. *Irrational Man*, like *Crimes and Misdemeanors* and *Match Point*, involves the “perfect murder.”

Allen’s first significant film, the mock-documentary *Take the Money and Run* (1969), is a grisly twist on the career of a real criminal, the teenage “spree-killer” Charles Starkweather, whose rampage in the company of his 13-year-old girlfriend left 11 people dead in Nebraska in 1957–58—12, if you add Starkweather, sent to the electric chair. Allen plays the nebbish Brooklyn twin, Virgil Starkweather, whose bungling sociopathy includes playing the cello in a marching band. He hands an indecipherable hold-up note to a bank teller, who slowly puzzles out the words and summons a colleague for help. It’s great fun, and draws on the long-forgotten history of Jewish gangsterism even as it tosses a mocking sidelong glance at the New Wave chic of *Bonnie and Clyde* (1967).

Allen’s humour is inseparable from cultural critique. This is true even of his refashioning of the Lothario as nerd-seducer. The joke of Allen as sex symbol—bumbling, hesitant, a scrawny bundle of tics—began in the fact that women really did adore him. They sensed he was “a closet case of potency,” as the film critic Pauline Kael wrote. Audiences rooted for Allen. “We want you to get the girl at the end,” Kael once advised him. “We

don’t want you to fail.”

Shone rightly praises *Zelig* (1983), also done in the style of a documentary. Its hero is a chameleon-cipher who randomly moves through history, slipped into actual newsreel footage of the great (Babe Ruth, F Scott Fitzgerald) and the malignant (a Nazi rally). This was done, painstakingly, before the advent of digital production wizardry. Again, Allen parodied a fashionable film, in this instance *Reds* (1981), Warren Beatty’s biopic about John Reed and Louise Bryant, bohemian radicals and celebrants of the Russian Revolution. Beatty presented this as soft-focus Hollywood romance, given dignity or pomp by the addition of interviews with surviving witnesses. In *Zelig*, Allen duplicated

### “The joke of Allen as sex symbol—bumbling, hesitant, a scrawny bundle of tics—was that women adored him”

the formula, intercutting the archive footage with commentary from prominent intellectuals, who earnestly sift through the meanings underlying *Zelig*’s journey. “Sickness was at the root of his salvation,” Saul Bellow theorises, with sublime pretentiousness. The satire is delicious but also serious—a tiny cosmic nightmare about conformism, the grateful escape into the “lonely crowd.”

Shone observes shrewdly that *Zelig* is heir to the great comedians of the silent era, “as voiceless as he is faceless... a silent ghost, unable to voice complaint or ‘kvetch,’ only

to mimic and please.” Ten years ago, I was in the audience when Allen was interviewed on stage by Janet Maslin, formerly the chief film reviewer for *The New York Times*, who at one point asked him to comment on comedies from Hollywood’s golden age. He was dismissive of many classics: *Bringing up Baby* and the collected gems of Preston Sturges were all stale rube jokes; *Some Like It Hot* was laboured female-drag. Whom did he like? Chaplin, Groucho Marx, Judy Holliday. The only humour that mattered, he said, was city humour. All his favourites come in city flavours: Louis Armstrong and Duke Ellington, Frank Sinatra and Marlon Brando.

The same is true of Allen’s recent European films. They are set theoretically in England, France, Italy, and Spain, but are really about London, Paris, Rome and Barcelona. Some of the films are good, some weak. But the surfaces always enthrall: the buildings and sidewalks, the rush and flow of traffic, the splash of light on water and stone. Allen’s attraction to old-world urbanity reflects what seems to be a growing estrangement from modern New York, now a jungle of scaffolding and torn up sidewalks.

Cities are places of friction, where people rub up against each other, often illicitly. The assertion of self comes, almost always, at the expense of someone else. The scandal that engulfed Allen in the 1990s, when he betrayed Mia Farrow with her adopted 21-year-old daughter (Soon-Yi Previn, now his wife of 18 years), exacted a toll not only on the family Allen and Farrow had formed, but on all of New York.

First its conqueror, Allen had become its rescuer in the mid-1970s, the lowest phase in New York history. President Ford withheld a federal bailout despite warnings of fiscal collapse. The tabloid headline: “Ford To City: Drop Dead” is imprinted on the retinas of New Yorkers. For the country at large, the city was reduced to the Times Square hellscapes of Martin Scorsese’s *Taxi Driver* (1976). Allen was a one-man gentrifier and painter of exquisite cityscapes—the warm colours of *Annie Hall* and the elegant black-and-white of *Manhattan*.

But 15 years later, the prince of the city was now its betrayer, himself a tabloid fixture. (“Mia Has Nude Pix,” “Tell It to the Judge.”) In truth, glimpses of Allen’s other self had been visible all along. Kael had asked: “What man in his forties but Woody Allen could pass off a predilection for teenagers as a quest for true values?” The reference was to *Manhattan*, with its the coltish 17-year-old co-star, Mariel Hemingway. The movie was a Pygmalion story. So was *Annie Hall*, and to some extent *Hannah and Her Sisters*. Allen was not just the director of that last film. He also “picked the wardrobe and hairdo for each actress, checking the makeup and rechecking, even reshooting a scene if he felt a minor detail of their appearance



In control: Woody Allen directing Penélope Cruz in *Vicky Cristina Barcelona*



was wrong,” Shone notes. Such fussing isn’t uncommon among filmmakers. DW Griffith did it with the white-goddess Gish sisters. Hitchcock made it the premise of *Vertigo*. But few harboured delusions about those cold auteurs. Allen was different. He had all but invented the movie mensch who seemed “to get” women. His relationship with Farrow was itself a Manhattan fairy tale—exposed

now as dreams always were in his films, only in this instance Allen stood before us, the malign sorcerer disrobed.

This is the foul dust that floats in the wake of Allen’s comedy. He has said, time and again, that the “Woody” onscreen is nothing like himself. But that is only partly true. Each of the many Woodys, surrogates for their creator, enact their different rituals of Zelig-like

flight. It is the same impulse that drives him now, not just to make film after film, but to speed through each, as if he wants to be rid of it. Woody Allen’s art springs as much from rage as from hope. It offers not freedom, but escape—fleeting, delicious, the violent release of laughter in the dark.

*Sam Tanenhaus is writing a biography of William F Buckley Jr*

# The sovereignty of love

Iris Murdoch’s many affairs fuelled her intellectual adventures, argues *Anne Chisholm*

## Living on Paper: Letters from Iris Murdoch 1934-1995

*Edited by Avril Horner and Anne Rowe (Chatto & Windus, £25)*

Iris Murdoch knew the risks of writing letters. In *The Black Prince*, her great novel about the destructive power of love, one character observes: “What dangerous machines letters are. Perhaps it is as well that they are going out of fashion. A letter can be endlessly reread and reinterpreted, it stirs imagination and fantasy, it persists, it is red-hot evidence.” She destroyed almost all those she received; but most of her correspondents kept hers, even the young man to whom she wrote in 1969: “Destroy this and all letters. And keep your mouth shut.”

Given that she always preferred to keep her amours and friendships in separate boxes, it seems safe to assume that the exposure of her overlapping relationships would not please her. With the publication of this substantial volume—a selection of 780, all but 40 unpublished—both Murdoch’s admirers, of whom I am one, and her critics, will find plenty to feast on. This is an unprecedented exposure of the heart and mind of a major novelist and thinker (the author of 26 novels and three major works of philosophy) and a woman who lived a life of unusual intellectual and personal freedom.

There has been a good deal written about Murdoch since her death from Alzheimer’s in 1999. Her reputation, at its height during the 1970s (she won the Booker Prize for *The Sea, the Sea* in 1978), had begun to slip by then. Both her novels, with their intellectual games, symbolism and tangled plots, and her philosophy, always concerned more with values and metaphysics than with logic and linguistics, seemed dated. As she began, as she put it, “sailing into the dark,” it seemed as if Murdoch’s day was done.

What stopped the slide towards obscurity was the publication, between 1999 and 2001, of her widower John Bayley’s three memoirs and Peter J Conradi’s outstanding authorised biography. Then there was Richard Eyre’s film, *Iris*, in 2001, in which Kate Winslet and Judi Dench as the young

and older Murdoch respectively gave their subject a touch of celebrity. The memoirs moved some and infuriated others, focusing as they did on Murdoch’s decline. Conradi’s book was a well-informed, deeply researched and emotionally sophisticated account that concentrated on her early life and years of achievement, but he also recorded a remarkable number of love affairs. He justified these revelations by showing how her philosophy and her fiction explored problems and ideas drawn directly from her own experience. The editors’ diligent and thoughtful work adds to but does not alter his portrait.

Murdoch, an only child, had a secure and loving childhood but no family correspondence has survived. Her life in these letters begins with her as a clever, eager school-

## “Romantic tangles among a group of close friends formed the basis of several future novels”

girl who sails into Oxford to study Classics in 1938, to discover intellectual excitement, love and politics in the shadow of the coming war. She joined the Communist Party and quickly made some of the most enduring friends and correspondents of her life with fellow students including Frank Thompson, Leo Piatzky and David Hicks. She was lovely to look at and much pursued. “I find myself quite astonishingly interested in the opposite sex,” she wrote to an old schoolfriend in April 1939, “and capable of being in love with about six men all at once—which gives rise to complications and distresses. And too many people are in love with me just at present—which though pleasing to my vanity, is also liable to be annoying and difficult.” Romantic tangles among a group of close friends formed the basis for several future novels. Perhaps her most significant Oxford-forged friendship was with another Somerville philosophy student, the “brilliant and beautiful” Philippa Bosanquet, later the moral philosopher Philippa Foot, whose good opinion she needed throughout her life. Later, she would

write that she had been a little in love with her from the start.

From autumn 1939, when the war swept most of her admirers away, her correspondence with and about them intensifies. They discuss the future they hope to see, political and personal; she contemplates writing a novel. “Jesus God how I want to write,” she told Frank Thompson in 1943. “I want to write a long long and exceedingly obscure novel objectifying the queer conflicts I find within myself and observe in the characters of others.” Some would say she went on to do so. Her romance with Frank took place more on paper than in the flesh; after he was killed in 1944, she came to feel that he was her truest love. The heroic soldier, part warrior, part mystic, is a recurrent figure in her novels.

By the time of Frank’s death she was in London, sharing a flat with Philippa, having joined the Treasury in 1942. A later letter to David Hicks, during their brief engagement in 1945, gives a painfully honest account of the damage done when she broke off a love affair with one man, Michael Foot (later the historian MRD, not the politician) to take up with another, Thomas Balogh, the Oxford economist and Philippa’s lover. Feeling she had betrayed them both, when Foot and Bosanquet then married and the affair with Balogh foundered, Murdoch was wretched. After telling Hicks the affair with the predatory Balogh was her first experience of complete passionate love, she then observes: “It’s a quadrilateral tale that would make rather a good psychological novel.” The selfishness of which lovers are capable became a constant theme of her fiction, most clearly in *The Black Prince* and *The Sea, the Sea*.

Through the decade after the war, when Murdoch had left the Civil Service to pursue philosophy first briefly at Cambridge and then at Oxford and to write her first novels, the letters show her living at full stretch, exploring ideas and relationships with an almost unnerving avidity, chronicled here in her many letters to the French experimental novelist Raymond Queneau. He introduced her to Sartre and sparked her early enthusiasm for existentialism. He also had a strong influence on her first novel, *Under The Net* ▶



© TERRY SMITH / THE LIFE IMAGES COLLECTION / GETTY IMAGES

(1954). Her letters to him—and they corresponded for 30 years—reflect her need for an intellectual mentor, preferably also a lover; she made her wishes plain, but the married Queneau preferred an *amitié amoureuse*. At the same time, there were overlapping affairs with susceptible academics in Oxford and London. That Murdoch disliked some aspects of her own behaviour is indicated in her description of Anna in *Under the Net*: “To anyone who will take the trouble to become attached to her she will immediately give a devoted, generous, imaginative and completely uncapricious attention, which is still a calculated avoidal of self surrender... This has the sad result too that her existence is one long act of disloyalty.”

Paying attention was, for Murdoch, the foundation of love. Derived in part from her Oxford tutor Donald MacKinnon, whose attention to her had led to some marital trouble, and more substantially from Simone Weil, this belief led her to think that if she gave someone her full attention she could not do him or her any harm. As for sex, as time passed she adhered more closely to the Platonic view that physical love was an intoxicating but fleeting stage on the way to a more elevated, spiritual apprehension.

Another lover, Elias Canetti, the Bulgarian Jewish author who went on to win the Nobel Prize for literature in 1981, was a man who dominated her physically and intellectually, and whose taste for power games fascinated and unnerved her. Her few surviving letters show she needed to hold on to him even after she married the man who brought her a simpler kind of love, the brilliant young

Oxford don six years her junior, John Bayley. There are no letters to him included here.

It was a happy, apparently tranquil marriage, but not without difficulties. Affairs with two colleagues at St Anne’s threatened both her marriage and her career, and led to her moving away from Oxford to work at the Royal College of Art in London in 1963. Published here for the first time is a striking run of letters to the bisexual Brigid Brophy, whose flamboyant role-playing and knowledge of the gay scene she enjoyed. But Brophy wanted more than Murdoch was prepared to give, and was also unimpressed with her work; one of the most revealing letters shows Murdoch humbly accepting that Brophy “detested” much about her writing. With Brophy, as with Philippa Foot, Murdoch demonstrated a sadomasochistic streak.

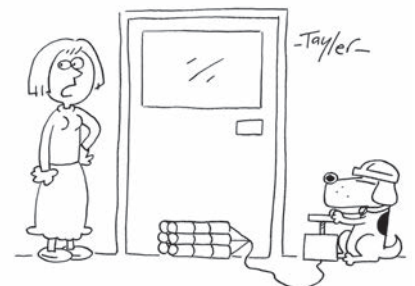
Once Iris had begun a relationship, or a correspondence, she rarely gave up. The time and energy this involved was immense; in the second half of her life, famous and endlessly busy, she would spend up to four hours a day writing letters. She was not an especially elegant or considered letter-writer; her letters are conversational, intimate, affectionate. Her tolerance for the demands of her correspondents was remarkable, even though it could indicate her own need to be endlessly loved and wanted. During the later 1960s she fell into what her editors call, rather primly, some “complex and unwise emotional imbroglios” with two of her RCA students. One of them, David Morgan, in particular tried her patience, gossiping about their romantic friendship and exploiting her financially. He was the one she asked, vainly, to destroy her

#### Apparently tranquil: Iris Murdoch and John Bayley in their Oxford home

letters. Instead he kept them for publication.

Love, in Murdoch’s novels, is endlessly various and as much to do with power as higher feelings. In them all, as in her philosophical enquiries, she pursued the truth about human aspirations and behaviour; her letters show the blunders, the self-delusion and the absurdities of which she, like the rest of us, was capable. For her, there were no boundaries between different kinds of love, and sexuality, like gender, was fluid. In 1950 she wrote to Queneau: “I think nothing is really worth anything except a) being happily married b) being a saint c) writing a really good novel. My chances of a) diminish yearly b) is far too difficult—there remains c) which still inspires hope.” In her own way, she managed a) and c). As these letters show, saintliness eluded her; but she kept trying. **P**

Anne Chisholm is working on a new edition of Dora Carrington’s letters



“Honey, I think the dog wants to go out!”



An abstract painting in shades of blue and white. It features thick, expressive brushstrokes that create a sense of movement and depth. The composition is dense with overlapping lines and shapes, some of which resemble organic forms like leaves or branches. The overall effect is one of dynamic energy and complex texture.

# BRYAN WYNTER

Deep Current High Country

Centenary Exhibition

5 – 27 November 2015

Ground-breaking paintings by celebrated St. Ives artist Bryan Wynter (1915-1975) exploring the elemental sources behind his post-war work. **Catalogue available.**

jonathan clark fine art

18 park walk SW10 0AQ | [info@jcfa.co.uk](mailto:info@jcfa.co.uk)  
london +44 (0)20 7351 3555 | [www.jcfa.co.uk](http://www.jcfa.co.uk)



## Books in brief

### No More Champagne: Churchill and His Money

by David Lough (*Head of Zeus, £25*)



Winston Churchill saved Europe from Hitler, saved it again with warnings about Soviet communism and then created the European Convention on Human Rights, one of the most eloquent expressions of human freedoms ever written.

But Churchill was plagued by one question: Who would keep him in the style to which he had become accustomed? Churchill made a fortune in his twenties after his father died. He gambled this and his grandmother's inheritance away by investing badly and pursuing an extravagant lifestyle. His beloved country house at Chartwell was always in need of expensive repairs. So money-making through writing had priority.

He relied at times on financial help from rich family and friends to make ends meet but mainly earned lots from journalism and books, which he had to work on continuously to repay debts. While he was Chancellor of the Exchequer between 1924-29, he accepted book and article commissions worth thousands of pounds from publishers.

One wonders whether had he focused more on the day job, Churchill would ever have allowed himself to be persuaded by Treasury orthodoxy to let Britain rejoin the gold standard in 1925, which he later acknowledged was his biggest mistake.

This excellent and entertaining work is worth reading for the lists of more than 1,000 bottles of champagne and 250 bottles of brandy that Churchill got through in 1949 alone. The title is taken from a note he left his wife Clementine in 1926 when he felt particularly pressed for cash and ordered that: "a. No more champagne is to be bought. Unless special directions are given... Cigars must be reduced to four a day." It is doubtful either order was kept for long.

Vicky Pryce

### Why the Dutch are Different

by Ben Coates (*Nicholas Brealey, £10.99*)



Standing in an Afghan refugee camp in Peshawar in 2000, I was talking to a senior United Nations official, who was Dutch, and who needed, as part of the task of getting food and aid to Afghans, to deal with the

Taliban. "These people are evil," he said, railing against them for praising the closing of a girls' school as a good day's work, and for devising an identity card for women that, like a black joke, had to be folded many times to entomb the picture in layers of paper, and even so, could not be easily compared with a heavily veiled woman.

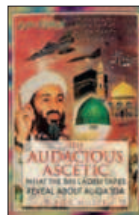
I thought then and still do how likeable it is that the Dutch get everywhere, even into the remotest corners of the world. Instinctively international, they are also European and liberal to the core, sure of their values and uninterested in relativism, just focused on fixing the problem in front of them. Ben Coates, a former young parliamentary adviser, has thrown himself at the question of why the Dutch are so distinctively, well, Dutch, in a book that is as quietly appealing as its subject.

It's full of fascinating details: that "Schipol," as in the airport, means "ship hole" and marks the place where many ships met their end. That Rembrandt is thought to have acquired his sensitivity to light and shade by growing up under the turning blades of a windmill. That the racks of cycles at every corner are part of a tidy environmentalism that sees nature—not just its watery aspects—as something to be controlled. Coates, who looked up a friendly Dutch girl when stranded there for a night, and stayed for supper—and then for good—is entirely convincing in his affectionate portrait. When you think of how often the country has been invaded and tramped through, it's astonishing that the Dutch remain so clear in their identity. But they do, and they're all the more likeable for it.

Bronwen Maddox

### The Audacious Ascetic: What the Bin Laden Tapes Reveal About Al-Qa'ida

by Flagg Miller (*Hurst, £22*)



Flagg Miller has been there. As the book opens, he is in Yemen having a fraught conversation with the leader of an al-Qaeda front at a festival celebrating the end of Ramadan. At one point a disgruntled elder starts waving a Kalashnikov and is duly restrained. The scene is a fitting backdrop to this book, which examines the Osama bin Laden tapes: a selection of 1,500 cassette recordings acquired by US special forces from a house Bin Laden lived in for a time in Afghanistan.

They are mostly what you'd expect from this "super-empowered angry man," a collection of conspiratorial rantings that Miller painstakingly analyses as they oscillate from the horrific—his desire to slaughter Shia and westerners—to the weird: his pathological loathing of Tabasco sauce. As Miller observes, Bin Laden's most significant contribution to the 21st century was arguably his ability to take new forms of "market, transportation and communication networks" and use them "to challenge traditional state arrangements." This is a fancy way of saying that the globalised world allowed him to become history's deadliest terrorist. The story of how he came to be the west's ultimate "ascetic adversary" and how the US expanded its security footprint into the Islamic world, needs to be told. Miller has succeeded.

David Patrikarakos

### The Blue Touch Paper

by David Hare (*Faber, £20*)



David Hare's beautifully abrasive memoir suggests, as with a firework, that you light the blue touch paper and stand back. Bristling with a magnificent arrogance, it coincides with a time in his playwriting career when he mines his own experience at Lancing College in the early 1960s in *South Downs*, commissioned as a companion piece to Terence Rattigan's *The Browning Version*. Hare was unbottling his autobiography for the first time. His parents were dead—his father, a naval officer and full purser with the Peninsular and Oriental, had been away at sea for most of each year; his mother, a sensitive soul from Paisley—and he found himself explaining to young actors what living in a post-war, God-fearing middle-class environment meant.

The lyricist and composer Stephen Sondheim once said that "no-one's childhood is uninteresting." In telling the full story of his apprenticeship as a playwright from school through Cambridge and the early days of fringe theatre, Hare delivers the angriest and most impassioned account of growing up I've read recently outside of Edna O'Brien's. He's had 17 new plays performed at the National Theatre, but his political and literary impulses remain subversive and contrarian, despite (because of?) that knighthood from Tony Blair. He also reveals a profound tenderness, as well as a disarming frankness, in mixing up his

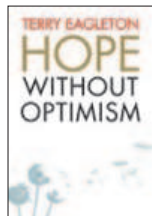


marriage to the television producer Margaret Matheson with his love for the Canadian actress Kate Nelligan, who starred in his first great play, *Plenty*, in 1978—which is where the book, completing a perfect arc of dynamic self-explanation, ends.

Michael Coveney

## Hope Without Optimism

by Terry Eagleton (Yale, £18.99)



Writing about the state of the Labour Party in the wake of Margaret Thatcher's third general election victory in 1987, the historian Eric Hobsbawm asked: "Has it got the future in its bones?" What Labour needed, he thought, was not yet another restatement of "eternal" verities, but an account of its "aims and values *now*" and of how they might be realised in what he called, quaintly though not un-presciently, the "micro-chip economy."

To borrow a distinction from Terry Eagleton's new book, you might say that Hobsbawm was urging Labour to offer hope rather than take refuge in optimism. The optimist, Eagleton argues, is congenitally disposed to believe that things can only get better. "Authentic hope, by contrast, needs to be underpinned by reasons."

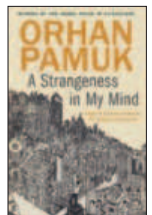
Although Eagleton is making a political argument here, sometimes it looks as if he thinks optimism is primarily an offence against good taste: he says there's something "intolerably brittle" about it, and dismisses the "cheeriness" of the optimist as the "most banal of emotions." It should be said, however, that he's no more forgiving of Ernst Bloch, the "philosopher of hope" whose prose is full of the kind of "pseudo-profundities" that give Marxist theory a bad name.

Bloch's most serious failing, though, is one that is widely shared on the left, which, Eagleton believes, too rarely asks itself the question, "What if it were to fail?" As long as the left considers that entertaining the possibility of failure is tantamount to "spiritual betrayal," it will never understand its defeats as anything other than minor delays on the royal road to utopia.

Jonathan Derbyshire

## A Strangeness in My Mind

by Orhan Pamuk (Faber, £20)



In his last novel, *The Museum of Innocence*, Orhan Pamuk (interview on page 72) told a story of romantic obsession among Istanbul's elite. His new work, *A Strangeness in My Mind*, tells a story of romantic obsession at the

other end of the social scale. At a wedding in his home town in eastern Turkey, Mevlut sees a beautiful girl. He is smitten and begins writing her love letters. He arranges an elopement; but is shocked to discover he has run away with the wrong sister. Was he fooled or is it fate? Whichever, Mevlut accepts Rayiha as his wife—as he accepts most things that happen to him.

While his friends join political protests or get rich in booming 1980s Istanbul, the passive Mevlut spends his life as a street vendor selling the Ottoman drink "boza" to nostalgic Turks. In an effort to avoid the sentimentality that novels about the working-class sometimes fall into, Pamuk has gone too far the other way, making Mevlut too inert to hold our interest for 600 pages. Still, the best scenes here display Pamuk's wonderfully humane analysis of romantic frailties.

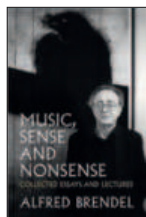
As a young man, Mevlut follows his teacher Neriman around town, fantasising about rescuing her from a pickpocket, so that "all the bystanders would say what a gallant young man he was, while Neriman would thank him and catch on to his interest in her." There are also very funny descriptions of Mevlut's visits to seedy adult cinemas.

As with nearly all Pamuk's work, the true object of desire is Istanbul. Whether he's explaining how the mafia takeover of the parking system made it easier to find a space or how Mevlut stops visiting a holy man because of the new generation of "bearded believers, backstreet hacks who never wear neckties," Pamuk is an acute and astute observer, uniting in his broad imagination the city's disparate worlds.

Sameer Rahim

## Music, Sense and Nonsense: Collected Essays and Lectures

by Alfred Brendel (Biteback, £25)



Alfred Brendel writes as tellingly about music as he plays it. Anyone familiar with the pianist's style—the clean lines of his Mozart and Schubert, the quiet wit of his Haydn—will recognise it in this wide-ranging collection of essays and lectures. Metronome markings and Mozart cadenzas, Charlie Chaplin and Chopin, all come under the gently probing scrutiny of this idiosyncratic mind.

The pieces included here span almost exactly five decades, including material from previous volumes *Musical Thoughts and Afterthoughts* and *Music Sounded Out*, as well as new writing. Brendel retired from the piano in 2008—"60 years of playing in public seemed sufficient"—and much of the new material here post-dates that retirement.

It's a watershed reflected in a shift in tone. Topics become broader—hearing, recordings, performance habits—and their treatment more concise.

There's also a new streak of whimsy that reaches its climax in a Dadaist fantasy-dialogue between three Alfred Brendels, but musical observations remain keen as ever. Live recordings are the "stepchild" of the industry, the difference between Haydn and Mozart is "the antithesis between the instrumental and vocal, motif and melody." A review (barely five pages long) of *The New Grove Dictionary of Music* is as audacious as it is insightful.

The last word on a lifetime of writing and music making, *Music, Sense and Nonsense* is more mischievous coda than weighty finale. Even death is faced with a wry smile. "If one had to hear Verdi incessantly in Paradise," Brendel observes, "I'd ask for leave and the occasional visit to Hell."

Alexandra Coghlan

## Kid Gloves

by Adam Mars-Jones (Particular, £16.99)



Memoir-writing is enjoying a renaissance. A new approach to the traditional dissection of familial relationships was sparked by the success of Helen Macdonald's award-winning *H is for Hawk*. Adam Mars-Jones's meandering memoir paints an affectionate but slightly dispassionate portrait of his father, a distinguished high court judge.

His father's career was defined by a series of high profile victories including a case against Bond creator Ian Fleming who was accused of plagiarism, but his battle with dementia proved unwinnable. While some might find it jarring that Adam Mars-Jones places himself so centrally in the narrative, it spawns one of the most moving passages where he describes coming out to his homophobic father.

Mars-Jones Senior attempts to reason his 23-year-old son out of his sexuality, but eventually becomes a supporter of gay rights. His son finds the shift disconcerting and exasperating, almost as if his father were trying too hard to make amends for his past bigotry: "Dad had to go too far" he sighs.

The problem with *Kid Gloves* is that it skirts round the book's central relationship. Mars-Jones avoids linear narrative, flitting between his father's Welsh upbringing and his own struggles when he lost a partner to Aids. The result is a fragmented portrait of a once brilliant man, which, although fluently written and often entertaining, ultimately leaves the reader cold.

Serena Kutchinsky

# Life

## Leith on life

Sam Leith

### The fear factor

"If it's in a word or it's in a look, you can't get rid of the Babadook..." On balance, it may not have been the best idea in the world to watch that movie by myself, in the dark, in bed. For those who may have missed it, *The Babadook* is a low-budget Australian horror movie about a widow, her disturbed six-year-old son and a mysterious, top-hatted monster from a children's book which invades their house and her collapsing mind. The tension in this film builds until, about halfway through, you wonder why you're finding it difficult to breathe, and you realise that you've crammed your fist into your mouth up to the third knuckle.

Well, I say halfway through. Actually, I was about 20 minutes in when I decided that on reflection, perhaps I'd instead spend the evening watching *Wreck It Ralph*, a children's movie about a character from a computer game who wants to win a medal. Watch it—with the door locked and all the lights on—I duly did.

I am in my early forties. What the hell is wrong with me? *The Babadook*, with its apparatus of creaking doors, black figures, mysterious noises and sinister children's rhymes is on the face of it no less silly than *Wreck It Ralph*, and yet—when actually submitting to its spell—I found myself rigid with fright.

What's more, the following evening I went back and watched *The Babadook* through. Why? Evidently, I like to be scared. Millions of us do. Stephen King once said that he wrote for the sort of people—



adults—who know with absolute certainty that if they stick their foot out of the duvet and place it on the floor beside their bed, a clammy dead hand will not shoot out to grasp their bare ankle, but who don't stick their foot out of the bed nevertheless, just to be on the safe side.

That seems to me a very good description of the pleasure of the supernatural horror: of being scared not like you're scared when a mugger pulls a knife on you; rather, scared with the sort of half-pleasurable frisson you get when you're wading into a cold sea and a wave comes and lifts the water up to your armpits, causing you to yelp.

But it's still hard to pinpoint exactly what the appeal is. In childhood, horror fiction—I grew up with James Herbert and Bram Stoker, HP Lovecraft and, of course, Stephen King—has the whiff about it of the forbidden, and, come to that, a strong likelihood of containing sex scenes. Horror films likewise: the fact that the video carried an 18 certificate added to its appeal. Wes Craven's death was a big thing for people like me; I had nightmares about Freddy Krueger before I even saw *A Nightmare on Elm Street*. But the appeal extends beyond the hope of titillation and the lure of the transgressive: with all the filth in the world a wireless connection away, and well past the age when slipping into an 18 is a dare, millions of us are still drawn to scary movies.

King, in his excellent but little-regarded sort-of memoir *Danse Macabre*, offers, roughly, an Aristotelian account of the appeal: catharsis. He thinks that you put your real anxieties on the shelf while you engage with the burlesqued, fictional anxieties of horror. There may be something in that, but there's also something about the essential childishness of horror material that commends it to us, isn't there?

Here are fears that, in reminding us of the arbitrary and lurid terrors of our childhoods, in some way return us to them. The terrors are based on obscure but consistent rules, as sent up by Wes Craven in *Scream*—where high-schoolers who have sex are first for the chop, and the black guy never has much of a life-expectancy—and there, surely, is the magical thinking of childhood. Like childhood's night terrors vanishing in the sunny morning: they are unreal, and you are exhilarated because you braved them.

Well, up to a point. I'm in the house by myself, now, and I can't get rid of the Babadook. Knock, knock, knock.

Sam Leith is an Associate Editor of Prospect

## Life of the mind

Anna Blundy

### Having doubts

I'm sitting on a beanbag up a remote mountain in northern Italy. This isn't the English person's idea of a Tuscan idyll: olive groves, lanterns in the trees, a warm evening breeze and a pink glow from the sunset as the first sip of Chianti goes down and the burly villagers shout greetings from the lane. It's raining and the house is taking on its winter chill. I'm on my own, have been on my own for days and will be on my own for... well, perhaps forever? I am sick with fear about money (there isn't any), about my son (too far away, too vulnerable) and I'm going to try (fail?) not to drink a whole bottle of wine tonight after my daughter goes to bed. Apart from the son and daughter aspect, it feels as though nothing much has changed in my mind since 1994 when I first visited my psychoanalyst. No, wait. It has. I had money then.

I am disappointed in psychoanalysis and angry with my analyst. I told him this the other day in London. In my mind I wept and shouted, told him he'd held out false hope. Where is this authentic self, this peace of mind, these more easily intimate relationships he promised? Where is this sense of fulfilment and acceptance of reality: of being old (45), of being single, of things not having worked out as I'd planned (marriage and career)? "But you promised!" I'd like to have shouted. "You made me believe my sense of isolation was a state of mind, self-imposed! You said if I get better and am able to accept people they'll accept me! You said if I was honest, angry, real that people wouldn't turn away! You said I might find someone who isn't you to rely on! You lied!"

But he never promised those things. Only by implication, and in my fantasy. I didn't shout or cry. After all, I've read the theory: Freud, Klein, Bion, among others. A patient came into a session recently in a very manic state, telling me she was worried she has OCD, that she is so stressed by the calendar (hers, the kids', her husband's) that she can hardly breathe. Half way through the session we agreed that she was masking a feeling of being emotionally out of control





with an attempt to control minor details that can be controlled. “But how do I control the emotions?” she begged. “I hoped you’d have a magic solution.” No. Only some understanding.

Understanding, pah! Sure, my shrink understands. He’d better do after knowing me for 20 years. “I realise, obviously, that you don’t represent the whole field and that on one level your retirement is understandable, acceptable,” I said. Sane, calm, rooted in reality.

Then I started backtracking. “Of course, I know things have changed. I know I’m completely transformed in lots of ways. I sleep well, I’m not anxious, I have intimate relationships with friends.” I told him about an intensely moving reconciliation with a dear friend that had happened the day before and that I’d never have managed years ago. Basically, I contradicted myself.

An analyst friend (you know who you are) told me recently that something I wrote here about good shrinks and bad shrinks had led him to believe I was expressing ambivalence about psychoanalysis itself. “Ambivalence?” I said. “I hate it at the moment!” But I don’t, of course. It just isn’t the quick fix cure to everything that we all wish existed (and that cognitive behavioural therapy touts). My reaction to my analyst’s prospective retirement has been a bit like that of someone who has been left by a partner. “I hate all men! Relationships are crap!” But I don’t. And they aren’t. I hope.

*Anna Blundy is a writer training to be a psychotherapist. The situations described are composite. Confidentiality has not been breached*

## Matters of taste

Wendell Steavenson

### Chocolate heaven

One day, quite, by chance, when I first lived in Paris, I came across a magical chocolate shop nestled among the strip bars of Pigalle. Tempted by the story-book vitrine, I pushed open the door. A bell tinkled and I was greeted by a grown-up Alice in her own chocolate wonderland. This was Denise Acabo, proprietress, famous for her girlish pigtailed and her enthusiasm for the very best chocolate and candies which she sourced from specialist makers all over France.

“What would you like, Madame?” she asked. My eyes roved the glass showcases filled with jars of chocolate covered coffee beans and candied orange slices, silver and gold almond dragées, pink and gold foiled bonbons and the row upon row of neatly

aligned chocolate tablets in every flavour and variation, coffee, nougatine, praline.

I was not a natural chocoholic. “I don’t know,” I said weakly, “what would you suggest?” Denise pointed to a table laid with slabs encased in clear plastic wrappings.

She gave me a “Kalouga” bar. “These are from a very good company in Lyon called Bernachon,” she told me. Sticky, softly, thickly, sweetly salty caramel enrobed in dark bitterly chocolate. It was richly, heavenly wonderful. It was the best chocolate bar in the world.

Denise’s shop, A L’Etoile D’Or, was a favoured destination for Japanese tourists and American food bloggers and was the only place outside Lyon where you could buy Bernachon. I soon learned that if I wanted to buy my Kalouga bar, I had to get there on a Thursday, because that was delivery day. By Friday, they were all gone.

In 2010, I left Paris for four years. On the first Thursday after my return, I headed straight for A L’Etoile D’Or. I walked past the place, couldn’t see it, walked back more slowly. Was I mistaken? It was gone! Boarded up and covered in billboards.

A friend of mine who lived next door, told me that the shop had blown up in a gas explosion. “This is a catastrophe!” I wailed. “I know,” said my friend, “it damaged all the pipes in our basement...”

Over the next few months I tried to find a substitute. After all, Paris is full of fancy chocolatiers. I tried Richart, with their 36 flavours of ganache; but no caramel. I tried Patrick Roger, where there’s a long queue every Easter for his extraordinary real egg shells lined in chocolate and filled with a cloud of exquisitely gritted praline mousse. Non. I went to Michel Chaudun, the enfant terrible of Parisian chocolatiers, famous for his enormous freeform chocolate sculptures, but the vendeur there shook his head.

I tasted a lime caramel chocolate jewel made by Jacques and Vanney Bellanger, and compared its zing with their pear drop Poire William caramel and the starburst of Johann Dubois’ strawberry poppy liquid caramel interior. Yes, they were all delicately delicious; but they weren’t quite Kalouga.

So I went to Lyon. Philippe Bernachon is the third generation of chocolate makers and he gave me a tour of his premises. He led me from the shop and showroom into the interior kitchens, past the pâtisseries balancing trays of millefeuille, until

**Philippe Bernachon and Florencia Soerensen, a Paraguayan stylist, collaborate to create a chocolate dress**

we came to the heart of the operation, the chocolate making room. Philippe explained the process.

“First we sort,” he said as a man carefully picked out bark and leaves from a sack of Venezuelan beans. “Then we roast them... but not too much. They shouldn’t be too grilled, because then the taste is wrong. After this the shells are removed and the beans crushed and mixed with sugar, coco butter, vanilla, and ground together... at the end it has the texture of mayonnaise.”

Chocolate making is a tricky matter of fixing chocolate crystals within the right structure to form the best smooth melty consistency. The technique for making solid chocolate for eating was only invented in the mid-18th century. Philippe described how the “mayonnaise-y” mulch is then “conched,” gently revolved in a tank warmed to between 45 and 50 degrees, for 40 hours, and finally “tempered,” before it can be poured into moulds. Then it is aged for three months. “Just like wine,” he said.

Philippe took me to the Bernachon cafe adjacent to the shop and treated me to a chocolate breakfast: two cups of hot chocolate, their best-selling Palet D’Or chocolates and, Philippe’s personal favourite, the Almond Princess, a chic Marie Antoinette of a bonbon with a semi-liquid centre surrounded by almond praline.

I told Philippe about my quest for the perfect caramel bar since L’Etoile D’Or had blown up. “Denise was a force of nature!” he said fondly. I told him I had walked past L’Etoile D’Or recently and it looked like some kind of work was going on inside.

“Yes, I talked to Denise just a couple of days ago. It’s true. She is going to reopen!”

*Wendell Steavenson is an Associate Editor of Prospect*



## Wine

Barry Smith

### Music to the tastebuds

Professional wine tasters like to carry out their task in silence. This isn't unnecessary fussiness; they know that extraneous noise can prevent them from picking up on the subtle features of a wine and, as the French oenologist Émile Peynaud wrote, that "quiet has always been considered necessary for a taster's concentration." Peynaud believed this was because "the sense of hearing can interfere with other senses during tasting," and research has proved him right. Scientific studies reveal that white noise in the ears at the level 85 decibels—the noise you'll hear in a commercial aircraft cabin in flight—can suppress our ability to perceive tastes like sweetness and saltiness. You can just imagine the negative impact of noisy restaurants.

While it's clear that noise can have a detrimental effect on wine tasting, can it also sometimes enhance it? This is something Charles Spence, a psychologist at Oxford University, and his colleagues have been exploring. By finding that people regularly associate certain pitches of sounds with certain tastes—for example high-pitched sounds on a violin with sourness—it is possible to see what happens when people sip a wine before and after hearing these sounds. Spence and I have conducted a number of public tastings events where we have tested this on unsuspecting drinkers and the results have been remarkably consistent.

It turns out that when tasters sip a Sauvignon Blanc and assess it for fruit and acidity, their perception is markedly changed in the direction of sourness when they re-taste it while listening to the sound of a high pitched violin. The same shift, this time in the direction of bitterness, can be induced in their assessment of a Cabernet Sauvignon with the addition of low bass notes. All of which raises the tempting question of whether there are some pieces of music that could be just right for a particular wine, and of course several experiments have been conducted to explore precisely that hypothesis. In a 2013 study, Spence and Deroy found that a taster's appreciation of a wine was significantly enhanced while listening to a matching piece of music compared to silence. The pieces of music for each wine were arrived at on the basis of a preliminary matching study where participants had to rate how well each of four wines matched eight pieces of classical music. You'll be pleased to learn that a good match for 2004 Chateau Margaux is Tchaik-



ovsky's *String Quartet No. 1 in D major* (movement two, Andante cantabile).

So what is going on here? Some principles are easy to discern like the high pitch bringing out the acidity and low pitch the bitterness. Wines may have these features; they are not being added by the sounds like digital seasoning. Directing attention to such features auditorily makes us notice them, and by noticing different levels in the music the palate may seek out different layers in the wine. This is an important clue: matching may be more about the brain's active attempt to put pieces of information together. After all, this is the brain's job.

So where will all this knowledge lead? Spence thinks that we will soon have codes on the labels that we can scan to reveal the most appropriate musical choice to enhance the drinking experience. Though it's worth bearing in mind that just as we have wine and music matchings we also have mismatches, which will interfere with your perception and appreciation of the liquid. So the next time you order a special bottle in a restaurant you may be at the mercy of whatever the waiting staff choose to play from their iPad, and it may not work at all. The lesson may be if you don't like the wine, change the music.

Barry Smith is Director of the Institute of Philosophy at the Institute of Advanced Studies, University of London

## DIY investor

Andy Davis

### Risky comforts

Past performance is not a guide to the future. Prices can go down as well as up. You may get back less than you invested. It is impossible to spend long around financial advisers or fund advertising without running into these and many similar truisms. Investing will always be a risky business; just look at what happened to the punters who piled into the fast rising Shanghai and Shenzhen stock markets in the spring. Not even the mighty Chinese government could halt the headlong collapse in prices.

I've always found risk one of the hardest parts of investing to comprehend, partly I think because of the way the professionals tend to talk about it. Most of the time they present it in terms of volatility, suggesting that the risk of an investment depends on how violently its price gyrates. In this formulation, shares bring with them the greatest dangers because they are the most volatile assets over time.

This approach is rooted in the idea that



we find it very hard to endure sharp falls in the value of our investments—such as we can periodically expect from the stock market—and as a result we tend to panic when this happens and sell at the worst possible moment, guaranteeing ourselves a loss. Among the professionals, this is known as puking.

Bitter experience confirms that this is indeed the way things often go, but as a framework I'm not convinced it really helps me to understand or manage the risks that I take as an investor. Volatility has become the favoured way for financial advisers to discuss risk with their clients because it offers an empirical way to quantify and illustrate one of the perils that they must face—you can map it with a line on a graph—but I can't help feeling that concentrating on it places too much emphasis on short-term price movements at the expense of long-term performance. Shares are indeed volatile but over more than a century they have also provided superior long-term returns after inflation.

Mark Fenton O'Creevy, professor at the Open University, argues that while the financial services industry espouses volatility, most of its customers look at risk through a different lens. The key factors for them are familiarity and controllability, he argues.

This is a much more helpful framework. First, it explains why people tend to regard savings accounts as a safe home for their money and to ignore the risk that inflation will erode its value over time, leaving them with less spending power than they will need to get by. The comforts of a financial product that is familiar and controllable obscure the dangers of remaining too heavily invested in cash. On the other hand, the stock market appears inherently uncontrollable and unfamiliar to most people, and so they instinctively feel it is not a safe place for them and their money.

The professionals are clearly right to suggest that one of the biggest risks we run as investors is the impulse to flee when the going gets rough. However, they face a tougher challenge in persuading most people that the financial products they regard as safe might actually turn out to be dangerous if they cling to them for too long.

The virtue of Fenton O'Creevy's formulation is that in discussing risk it starts from the right place: the individual, not the market. The way to understand risk isn't to focus on some abstract phenomenon such as volatility, which is entirely beyond our control. Instead, we need to look to our own opinions and biases, which we may be able to influence. I strongly suspect that a litmus test allowing for notions of familiarity and controllability will serve me better than any amount of time spent computing standard deviations. **P**

Andy Davis is Prospect's investment columnist



# “ Speak French, Spanish or Italian as they are *really* spoken ”

Now you can improve or maintain your French, Spanish or Italian with the bi-monthly audio magazines, *Bien-dire*, *Punto y Coma* and *Tutto Italiano*.

*Bien-dire*, *Punto y Coma* and *Tutto italiano* are all published six times a year from France, Spain and Italy and include a glossy magazine packed full of lively, topical and original articles and in-depth interviews in French, Spanish or Italian to give you the inside track on French, Hispanic or Italian culture. Key words and phrases are glossed into English on the facing page. The articles, in turn, are narrated on the accompanying 60-minute audio CD to enable you to improve your listening comprehension and understand French, Spanish or Italian as it's really spoken. In addition, every feature is graded for difficulty so that you can assess your progress with each issue.

If you now want to be able to speak like a native, a subscription to *Bien-dire*, *Punto y Coma* or *Tutto italiano* will inspire, motivate and help you to achieve fluency.

## Key Benefits

- Speak French, Spanish or Italian with confidence by learning the language as it's *really* spoken
- Improve your vocabulary and listening comprehension
- Improve your knowledge of French, Hispanic or Italian culture
- Lively, relevant and up-to-date, authentic content
- Take advantage of on-going, portable and flexible learning

**SPECIAL OFFER**  
£51 Saving!

Subscribe Today to either *Bien-dire*, *Punto y Coma* or *Tutto italiano* for a year for just £89 (normal price £99) and you will receive an extra issue, worth over £16 for FREE, and a FREE electronic dictionary bookmark worth £24.99 - a combined saving of £51!



Order **TODAY** By calling  
0800 141 2210

Outside the UK call  
+44 117 927 2236

Or order by visiting our website:  
[www.languages-direct.com/PR2115](http://www.languages-direct.com/PR2115)

## Subscribe Today!



01. Please send me a year's subscription (6 bi-monthly magazines and 6 accompanying audio CDs for £89) to *Bien-dire* French Audio Magazine + 1 Extra FREE Issue and a FREE French-English electronic dictionary!

☐

Please send your completed order form together with payment to:



02. Please send me a year's subscription (6 bi-monthly magazines and 6 accompanying audio CDs for £89) to *Punto y Coma* Spanish Audio Magazine + 1 Extra FREE Issue and a FREE Spanish-English electronic dictionary!

☐

**Languages Direct Ltd**

**FREEPOST RSKB-KSKR-LYLU, Bristol BS1 6UX**

Delivery: Your first issue should be with you within 10 days of receiving your order.



03. Please send me a year's subscription (6 bi-monthly magazines and 6 accompanying audio CDs for £89) to *Tutto Italiano* Italian Audio Magazine + 1 Extra FREE Issue and a FREE Italian-English electronic dictionary!

☐

**Outside the UK send to:**

Languages Direct, Spike Island, 133 Cumberland Road,  
Bristol, BS1 6UX, United Kingdom

## 60 day money-back guarantee

If for any reason *Bien-dire*, *Punto y Coma* or *Tutto italiano* is not for you, just let us know within 60 days, and we'll refund your subscription in FULL, and you can keep your first issue. If at any time later you decide to cancel, we'll refund you the cost of any unmailed issues.

To see our full range of excellent language learning materials visit [www.languages-direct.com](http://www.languages-direct.com)

Media Ref: PR2115

Cheque: Cheque enclosed for £89 (payable to Languages Direct Ltd) ☐

or Card: Please charge my credit card for the sum of £89 only Mastercard ☐ Visa ☐ Amex ☐

Card number: \_\_\_\_\_

Expiry date: \_\_\_\_\_ Card CVV Code: \_\_\_\_\_

First name: \_\_\_\_\_ Last name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Postcode: \_\_\_\_\_ Country: \_\_\_\_\_

Telephone: \_\_\_\_\_ Email: \_\_\_\_\_



**dating4grownups**  
www.dating4grownups.co.uk

**dating4grownups**

Private consultations and dating introductions for the discerning over 40's, with no upper age limit. London/Home Counties, South Coast & East Anglia.

Please call David, who is the **'Matchmaker Extraordinary'** on 01728 635064 or 07986 213120  
[www.dating4grownups.co.uk](http://www.dating4grownups.co.uk)

**C. L. Hawley**  
*Academic books bought and sold*

**Literary Criticism, History, Politics etc**

**Browse and buy online or contact us with books for sale**

**[www.clhawley.co.uk](http://www.clhawley.co.uk)**  
**Tel: 01756 792380**

*What beneficiaries say\**



**THE ROYAL LITERARY FUND**

*'One of the quiet pillars of our civility.'*

*'A miracle.'*

*'An increasingly noble, increasingly necessary, endeavour.'*

*'A life-raft to writers.'*

*'A ray of light shining through a dark cloud.'*


\*quotes from RLF beneficiaries during 2013-14

**The Royal Literary Fund** has been supporting published writers during hard times for over 200 years.

If you need help e-mail [eileen.gunn@rlf.org.uk](mailto:eileen.gunn@rlf.org.uk) or go to [www.rlf.org.uk](http://www.rlf.org.uk)

All enquiries are treated with sympathy and in the strictest confidence.

Registered Charity No 219952



**1 ACROSS Cryptic Crosswords Magazine**  
edited by *Prospect's* own Didymus

You can enjoy "exclusive" monthly cryptic crosswords, usually thematic, delivered to your door or inbox. Puzzles by Araucaria (posthumously), Doc (aka Didymus, Gozo, Maskerade), Enigmatist, Boatman, Pedrock, Atlas, Cullen and Chalicea appear regularly among our growing band of professional compilers. New amateur setters are encouraged to submit too. Do come and join us with a subscription!

Our monthly magazine includes five puzzles, one is a Prize Puzzle, an editorial and members' feedback. The magazine is "Witty and ingenious" and "A sheer pleasure". Send C5 sae for details and free sample issue to: 1 Across, The Old Chapel, Middleton Tyas, Richmond, DL10 6PP

**Menton,  
Côte d'Azur**

(40 mins from Nice) Pretty two bedroom house, sleeps four. Well-equipped kitchen and large sitting room. Set in grounds of 1860's town villa. Pool. Charming courtyard with lemon trees and views of the Bay of Menton and old town. 10 minute walk to covered market, beaches and bus and train station. Off street parking available. Booking now for 2016.

Tel: 07900 916729 Email: [pattiebarwick@gmail.com](mailto:pattiebarwick@gmail.com)  
[www.mentonsejour.com](http://www.mentonsejour.com)

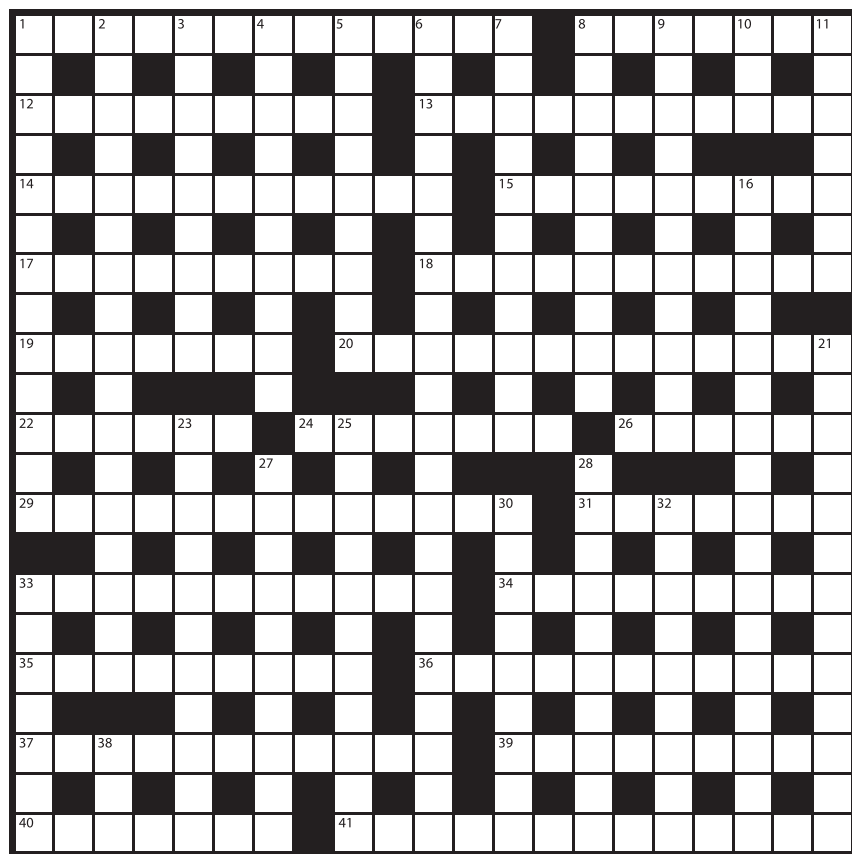


  
**CHAPMAN**  
MADE IN ENGLAND

[WWW.CHAPMANBAGS.COM](http://WWW.CHAPMANBAGS.COM)



## The generalist by Didymus



### ACROSS

- 1 French-Swiss herdsman's song (4-3-6)
- 8 Seat or bed fitted with a mule for carrying the sick or wounded (7)
- 12 Wirral, Llŷn, Penwith or Trotternish (9)
- 13 A trifling lie (11)
- 14 Manchester United's original football club (6,5)
- 15 Orkney isle, once the home of the Fin Folk, separated from Mainland by the Roost (9)
- 17 Showing or exhibiting (9)
- 18 Microscopically short moments of time (11)
- 19 Orthodox or ecclesiastical (7)
- 20 Area of Oceania which includes Vanuatu, Bismarck and Admiralty Islands and parts of Papua New Guinea (4,9)
- 22 18th century French composer of the operas *Castor et Pollux*, *Platée* and *Les Boréades* (6)
- 24 Spenser's squeeze (7)
- 26 First-magnitude star in the constellation Aquila (6)
- 29 eg, a crotchet held longer than its customary value (9,4)
- 31 Capital of French Polynesia (7)

- 33 "Gravelly wooded hill" suburb in the borough of Bromley (11)
- 34 Aromatic rootstock of an East Indian plant of the ginger family (9)
- 35 Artists living an unconventional life (9)
- 36 Spanish bayonet (5-6)
- 37 Hampshire resort near Gosport; location of a disused Fleet Air base (3-2-6)
- 39 Cocked hats with opposing brims turned back and caught in three places (9)
- 40 Move backwards (7)
- 41 Theatrical director at the Old Vic during the 1930s; administrator there and at Sadler's Wells from 1939 to 1945 (6,7)

### DOWN

- 1 Long ringlets of a lady's hair (8,5)
- 2 James Cowley Morgan Fisher, the head of the New Church of the First-born (10,7)
- 3 Inhabitant of the burgh associated with "jam, jute and journalism" (9)
- 4 Lighthouse off Holyhead Island, designed by Daniel Alexander in 1809 (5,5)
- 5 A snowdrop! (9)
- 6 Aim high, as Emerson wrote in his essay "Civilisation" in *Society and Solitude* in 1870 (5,4,5,2,1,4)
- 7 Slang terms for illegal drugs (6,5)
- 8 Like the aloof MacDonalds and Campbells, say? (10)
- 9 Waterway, built between 1793 and 1801, linking Loch Fyne and the Sound of Jura (6,5)
- 10 Celtic river god or a mythical king of Britain (3)
- 11 Nickname for Hillsborough's football team (3,4)
- 16 William Kent, Lancelot Brown or Gertrude Jekyll, for instance (9,8)
- 21 A mental reservation (7,6)
- 23 Descriptive of a ländler (1,10)
- 25 Islamic humanitarian organization (3,8)
- 27 Augustinian priory on the largest island in the Lake of Mentelth (10)
- 28 Exhibiting a milky iridescence (10)
- 30 Home ground of MJK Smith and Dennis Amiss (9)
- 32 The Feast of Weeks or Shavuot (9)
- 33 Fruit pie with a thick crusty topping (7)
- 38 Slang for a bomb or mine (3)

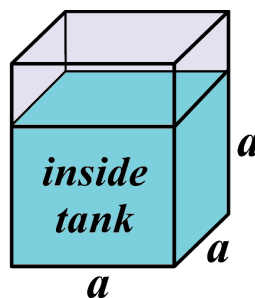
### Last month's generalist solutions

Across: 1 Spatchcock 6 Briquettes 12 Ozone layer 13 Mace-bearer 14 Comic verse 15 Benthamite 17 Mare Nectaris 18 Anapaest 20 Schmoie 21 Aretha Franklin 23 Rescue-grass 30 Hoek van Holland 31 Hearth 33 Mud-clerk 34 Stieg Larsson 36 Sea of Japan 37 Atkins Diet 38 Escrimers 39 Brooklands 40 Steve Reich 41 Sea spiders  
Down: 1 Scotch mist 2 A bon marché 3 Crescendos 4 Clarence 5 Chelsea tractor 7 Reamer 8 Quentin Crisp 9 Elecampane 10 Torricelli 11 Serpentine 16 Tim Tremlett 19 Laurence Sterne 22 Gesneriaceae 24 Rhymesters 25 Geldtasche 26 Oval Office 27 Georg Solti 28 Prescience 29 Thanatosis 32 Illinois 35 Tanrec

## Enigmas & puzzles

### Think tank

Barry R Clarke



Professor Neuron was staring at the cube of water in his empty fish tank. The inside of the tank was cuboid shaped, with the base measuring  $a \times a$  square feet, and the water having an internal height of  $a$  feet. The professor

placed a square number  $b$  of identical cuboid bricks in the tank, each having an area of one square foot in contact with the inside of the tank base. The water subsequently rose to an internal height of  $c$  feet without exceeding either the tank or the brick height. The numbers  $a$ ,  $b$ , and  $c$  are digits from 1 to 9 inclusive with no two digits being identical.

What are the values of  $a$ ,  $b$ ,  $c$ ?

### Last month's solution

On average, 27 trials are required. The problem can be reduced to three cases according to the position of the initial grid square: a corner (1, 3, 7, 9), a middle of side (2, 4, 6, 8), or the centre (5). For each position in the grid, the possible next visits can be listed as follows: (1) 2 or 4, (2) 1, 3 or 5, (3) 2 or 6, (4) 1, 5 or 7, (5) 2, 4, 6 or 8, (6) 3, 5 or 9, (7) 4 or 8, (8) 5, 7 or 9, (9) 6 or 8. However, with three jumps it is only possible to end at the centre by starting at a side. The possible combinations starting at 2 are (a) 2125, 2145, 2325, 2365, and (b) 2525, 2545, 2565, 2585. The total probability for group (a) is  $4 \times (1/9) \times (1/3) \times (1/2) \times (1/3)$  and for group (b) is  $4 \times (1/9) \times (1/3) \times (1/4) \times (1/3)$ . With four possible side starts, the total is  $4/27$ .

## How to enter

### The generalist prize

The winner receives a copy of *The Quotable Feynman*, edited by Michelle Feynman (Princeton University Press.) The Nobel prize winner Richard Feynman was one of the greatest physicists of the 20th century—and also one of the most loquacious. This volume, with a foreword from Brian Cox, collects together some of his most memorable, and deceptively profound, zingers.



### Enigmas & puzzles prize

The winner receives a copy of *An Einstein Encyclopedia*, edited by Alice Calaprice, Daniel Kennefick & Robert Schulmann (Princeton University Press.) A complete guide to Einstein's life and work, this book is a joint effort by three specialists who between them set out a detailed picture of one of the greatest scientific minds of all time.



### Rules

Send your solution to [answer@prospect-magazine.co.uk](mailto:answer@prospect-magazine.co.uk) or Crossword/Enigmas, *Prospect*, 2 Queen Anne's Gate, SW1H 9AA. Include your email and postal address. Entries must be received by 3rd November. Winners announced in our December issue.

### Last month's winners

The generalist: Phillip Hearsom  
Enigmas & puzzles: Tony Harker

Download a PDF of this page at [www.prospectmagazine.co.uk](http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk)

## The way we were

# Leaders of the opposition

Extracts from memoirs and diaries, chosen by *Ian Irvine*

**In February 1975, Barbara Castle writes in her diary on the effect of Margaret Thatcher's election as Conservative leader:**

"I can't help feeling a thrill. She is so clearly the best man among them..."

"[Her] election has stirred up her own side wonderfully; all her backbenchers perform like knights jousting at a tourney for a lady's favours... by making an unholy row at every opportunity over everything that the Government does. Today they were baiting Harold [Wilson] over Reg Prentice's speech, and once again Harold was getting away with it, not by wit, but by sheer verbosity. Everybody kept glancing at Margaret to see when she would take him on. She sat with bowed head and detached primness while the row went on; hair immaculately groomed, smart dress crowned by a string of pearls. At last she rose to enormous cheers from her own side to deliver an adequate but hardly memorable intervention with studied charm. Roy Jenkins, sitting next, groaned and I said, 'She's not quite real, is she?'"

In her memoirs Barbara Castle added: "No one seeing her then would have foreseen the mastery she developed over the House as Prime Minister. She was not very effective in opposition. But all the time she was proving what I have always believed to be true—that performance in opposition is no clear indicator of what a leader is capable of achieving when given responsibility."

**In June 1981, Frank Johnson writes about Michael Foot, who was elected Labour leader in November 1980, presenting himself as a compromise candidate to unite the party:**

"One suspects that [Mr Foot] is rather melancholy. After a lifetime of romantic left-wingery—in journalism, in biography, on a thousand television panels and editions of *Any Questions?*, in set-piece orations in the Commons—he suddenly, against all augury, became leader of the Labour Party..."

"Until he was propelled by fortune to his



Margaret Thatcher when she became Leader of the Opposition in 1975

present position, Mr Foot had attained a quite different, though equally formal and traditional position in our national life. He was Her Majesty's Leader of the Left.

"It was a position just as dignified as Black Rod or the Lord Warden of the Cinque Ports. But... on achieving this further dignity, Mr Foot has made a mortifying discovery: there are lots of people to the left of him... For, while Mr Foot was ranting happily away all those years, a different, less respectable, less comfortable left was coming into being. To a traditionalist such as Mr Foot, accustomed all his life to a left which shared his bourgeois taste for parliamentary democracy and for belles-lettres, it must be a baffling, faintly menacing, universe."

**In late 1988, after being elected Leader of the Labour Party in 1983, Neil Kinnock was interviewed by BBC journalist Vivian White:**

"As leader of the Labour Party, what is now your personal view of unilateral nuclear disarmament?" Kinnock replied: "As leader of the Labour Party, I am not allowed personal views. Personal views and being leader of the Labour Party are almost a contradiction in terms."

**In December 1992, Neil Kinnock reflected on his policies as Labour leader, saying:**

"If it had been possible to have led the Labour Party of 1983 or 1987 or 1992 by Attleian acerbity, or Bevanite evangelism, Wilsonian wiliness or Callaghan bonhomie, then the task would have been much easier... In the event, however, the condition of the party made management an obligation, so I got on with it.

"It would have been useful to have had a neat and magnetic central theme... I have to say, however as a matter of fact rather than self-defence, that until as late as 1991 there was always a significant risk that any progressive lunge that was too big or too quick could have fractured the developing consensus... And as far as the central theme was concerned, I and others put repeatedly: 'the purpose is to win.'"

**On 7th May 1999, Alan Clark wrote in his diary about William Hague, the leader of the Conservatives:**

"There has been (on our TV screen) little Hague, in his 'Bruce Willis' haircut (whatever that is) and his dreadful flat northern voice. I find it just awful, skin-curdling, that the party—our great Party—formerly led by Disraeli, Balfour, Churchill, Macmillan, Thatcher (even) could be in the hands of this dreadful little man who has absolutely no sense whatever of history or pageantry or noblesse oblige."

**Chris Mullin, Labour MP, writes in his diary on 30th May 2001:**

"Watched William Hague answering questions on television. Everyone keeps saying how awful he is, but I find him impressive. He is calm, cheerful, rational and exudes self-confidence. It is just that the tide of history is against him. Also, he has based his campaign on an appeal to the meanest instincts of the British people at a time when they—or most of them—want something better. Thank goodness." P





# HURTWOOD HOUSE

THE  
BOARDING  
SCHOOL  
FOR THE  
**CREATIVE &  
PERFORMING  
ARTS**



[www.hurtwoodhouse.com](http://www.hurtwoodhouse.com)



# AIR CON

Air quality around Heathrow currently breaches EU law. And yet the Airports Commission Report suggests that, after a third runway is built, it will be within legal limits. So millions more car journeys to the airport are going to mean less pollution. Really?

Air quality at Gatwick has never breached EU limits and we still won't even with a second runway. So best to get on with it, choose the option that can actually be built and make sure Britain gets the benefits. Obviously.

LONDON *Gatwick*  
**OBVIOUSLY.**  
[gatwickobviously.com](http://gatwickobviously.com) and @LGWobviously